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ABSTRACT

Materials are provided for a unit of study that will help high school students learn about the life of Louis Riel, who as the leader of the Canadian Rebellion of 1885 led his followers into armed conflict with the Canadian government. Riel lived at a time of rapid change in western Canada. The extinction of the buffalo ended the people's nomadic way of life, and the coming of the railway brought an increasing number of white settlers to the West. When the Canadian government ignored the pleas of Riel and his people for help, rebellion broke out. The unit's seven chapters examine Riel's life and personality, the rebellion and surrounding events, and whether Riel was justified in leading his followers into armed conflict. Each chapter contains questions or facts for students to keep in mind as they read as well as student readings and activities. Students dramatize scenes, draw cartoons, prepare comic strips, view films, write newspapers, discuss readings in class, write plays and poetry, do library research, and participate in a mock trial. The unit concludes with a bibliography of additional resource materials and a subject index. (RM)

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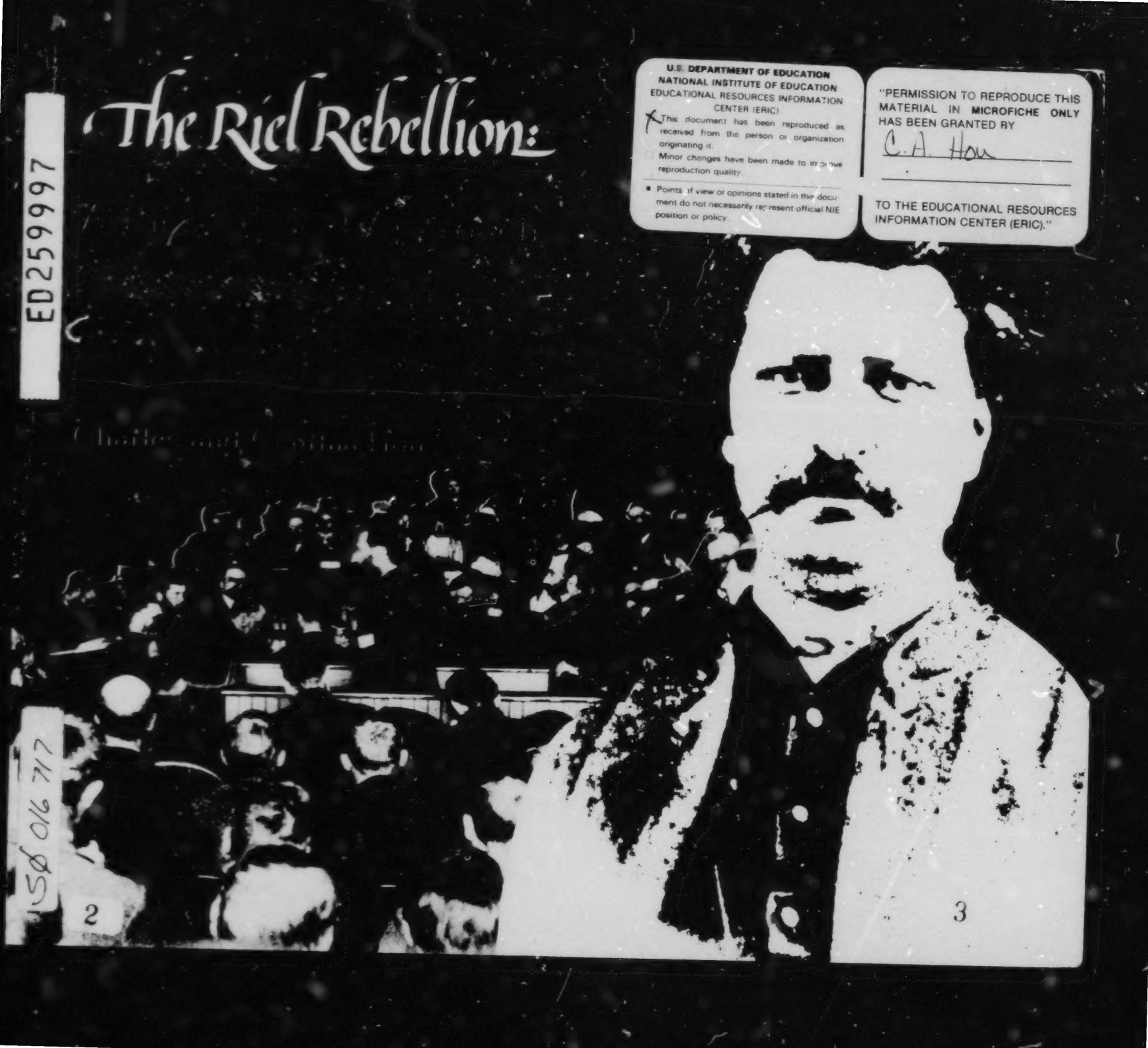

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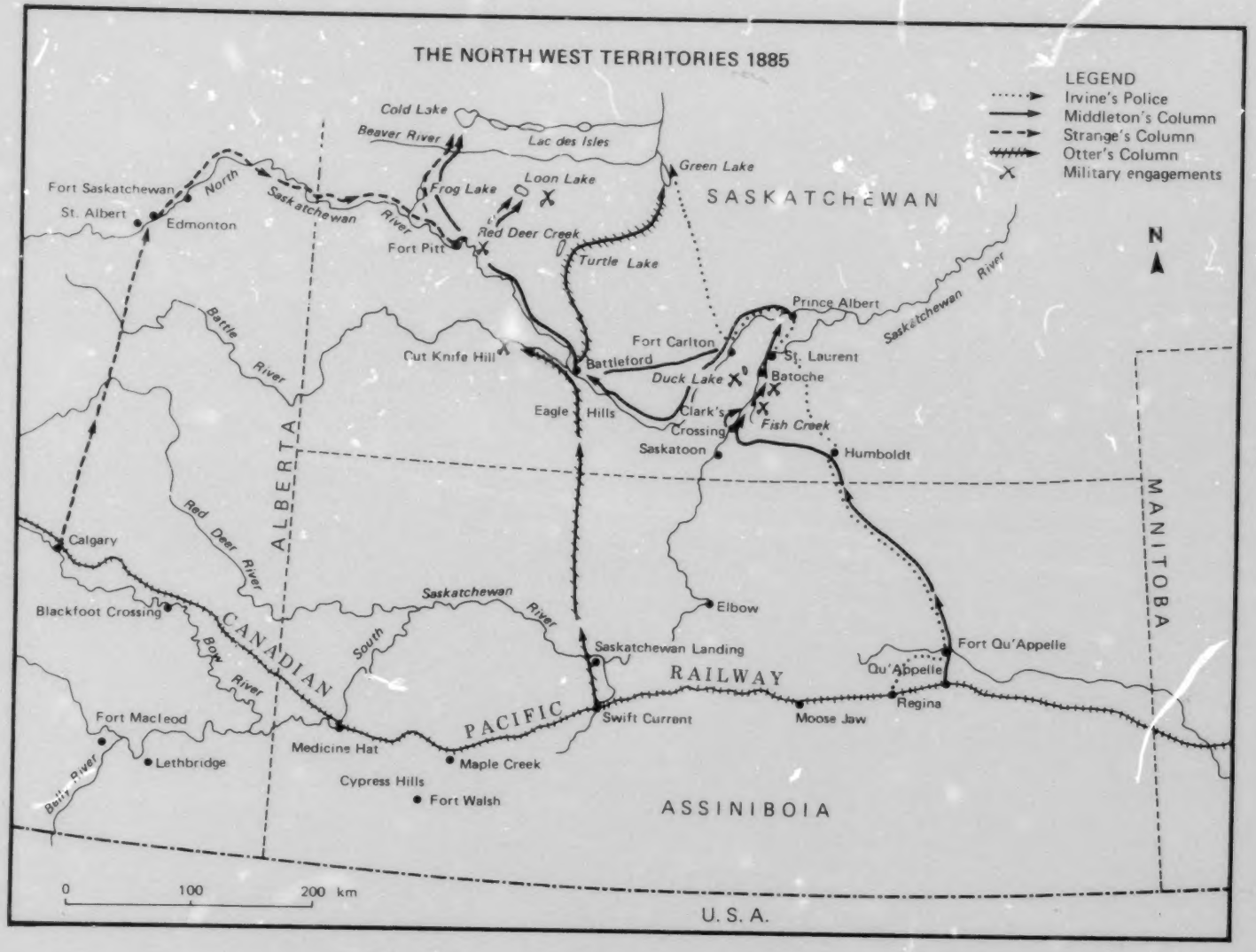
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Loon Lake
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Prince Albert
Saskatchewan River
Battle River
Cut Knife Hill
Fort Carlton
Battleford
St. Laurent
Duck Lake
Batoche
Eagle Hills
Clark's Crossing
Fish Creek
Saskatoon
Humboldt
ALBERTA
MANITOBA
Red Deer River
Calgary
Blackfoot Crossing
Bow River
CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY
South Saskatchewan River
Elbow
Saskatchewan Landing
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The Riel Rebellion:

A Biographical Approach

by Charles and Cynthia Hou

Tantalus Research Limited
Vancouver, Canada

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Vancouver, British Columbia

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The Riel Rebellion: A Biographical Approach

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Preface

On November 16, 1885, a man named Louis Riel was hanged in Regina. He had been tried before a judge and jury, found guilty of high treason, and sentenced to death. In life he had been a saviour in the eyes of some people and a traitor in the eyes of many others; in death he became a martyr and Canada's most famous rebel hero.

Riel lived at a time of rapid change in western Canada. For the native people of the prairie region the late 1870's and early 1880's marked the end of a nomadic or semi-nomadic way of life. The buffalo they had previously followed over the plains had become almost extinct, and the people were forced to adopt a new way of life based on agriculture. The coming of the railway in the early 1880's also brought an increasing number of white settlers to the west.

The Indians and Riel's own people, the Metis, had great difficulty adjusting to the new conditions, and the government in Ottawa often seemed to ignore their pleas for help. The Metis asked Riel to help them get action from the government. When even he failed to do so, rebellion broke out.

Because the Metis were French-speaking there was much sympathy in Quebec for their cause. The death of their leader resulted in a surge of resentment there against English-speaking Canadians in general and the Conservative party in particular. Both the people in the west and the people in Quebec felt cut off from the federal government at the time of the rebellion, and these feelings of "regional alienation" persist even today.

Who was the man who led the Rebellion of 1885, and what was he like? Was he justified in leading his followers into armed conflict with the Canadian government? Was he guilty of the crime for which he was put to death? In this book you will look at Riel through the eyes of a number of people who knew him best. You will also see the rebellion and surrounding events as they appeared to both the great and the ordinary people of the time.

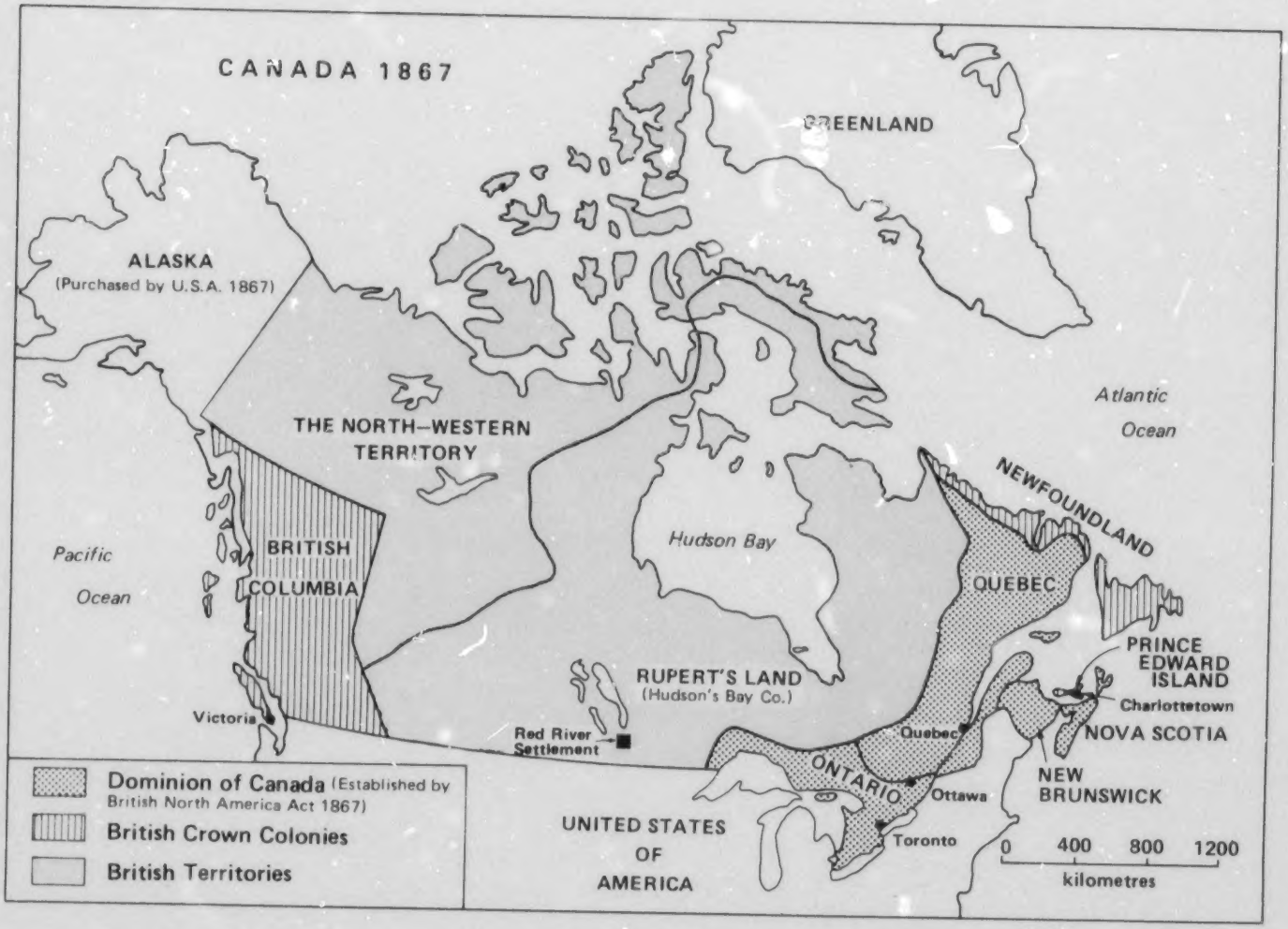
Some of these people, such as Sir John A. Macdonald and Gabriel Dumont, played a major role in Canadian history and you may already be familiar with their names. Many of the others, though, have equally interesting stories to tell. Among them are a Metis woman who nursed the rebel wounded at Fish Creek and Batoche; two Indian chiefs who tried desperately to keep their people out of the rebellion; a teenage girl who spent two months as a hostage of the Crees; and the priest who accompanied Riel

to the scaffold on the day of his execution. The people whose stories are told in this book represent a cross-section of Canadian society in 1885. As you read about them you should gain an understanding of their times, the rebellion and Riel himself.

You will also learn about the trial of Louis Riel in the summer of 1885. Many people at the time claimed that he was not treated fairly. He was, they felt, tried by the wrong man, in front of the wrong jury, and under the wrong law. Many important witnesses were not called to testify, and certain significant documents were not produced. In short, justice was not done.

As you read this book you will study for yourself many of the maps, photographs, documents and first-hand accounts on which our knowledge of the rebellion is based. These materials are known as primary sources, and they are the raw materials of history. You will be able to look at them as an historian would and draw your own conclusions. Many topics for further research or discussion are given, and many interesting projects suggested. Among these are debates, dramatizations, and the preparation of newspapers with relevant letters to the editor, political cartoons and "on the scene" reports of the rebellion. You may even wish to give Riel a new trial, with students playing the roles of Riel, the judge, jury and witnesses.

To understand the present, one must understand the past. The knowledge you gain as you read this book will help you understand your country better, and the skills you develop as you do some of the suggested projects will help you cope with the problems of Canada today and in the future.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ALASKA
(Purchased by U.S.A. 1867)
THE NORTH–WESTERN
TERRITORY
Atlantic
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NEWFOUNDLAND
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BRITISH
COLUMBIA
Hudson Bay
QUEBEC
PRINCE
EDWARD
ISLAND
RUPERT'S LAND
(Hudson's Bay Co.)
Charlottetown
Victoria
Red River
Settlement
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OF
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Dominion of Canada (Established by British North America Act 1867)
British Crown Colonies
British Territories

1. Setting The Scene

READING WITH A PURPOSE

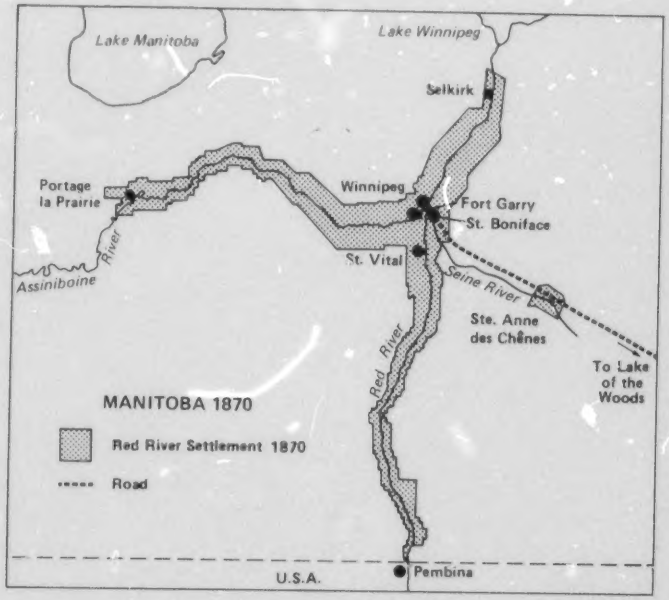
As you read this chapter try to answer the following questions:

1. What influence did Louis Riel's family have on his life?
2. What was the importance of Riel's education?
3. Why did Riel oppose the establishment of Canadian control over Red River?
4. Why is Riel called "The Father of Manitoba"? Why was he denied the respect due to the founder of a province?
5. What led to Riel's mental breakdown in 1876?
6. Why did the people living in the Saskatchewan District ask Riel to return to Canada in 1884?

LIFE IN THE RED RIVER SETTLEMENT

At the time of Louis Riel's birth, buffalo herds still roamed the prairie region of the North West. The hides of these animals and the pelts of others were in great demand, and the fur trade was thriving. The Red River area south of Lake Winnipeg was the centre of this activity. This area was also the site of the first farming community in the North West. The original Scottish colonists of the Red River Settlement had arrived in 1812 to farm land granted by the Hudson's Bay Company, and by the 1840's several English- and French-speaking communities had grown up. Among these were Fort Garry and St. Boniface, at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers.

A number of English-speaking fur traders and settlers in the Red River area had married Indian women. Their descendants were known as half-breeds,* and most of them made their living by farming. Many of the French-speaking fur traders or voyageurs had also married Indian women, and their French-speaking half-breed descendants were known as Metis. Most of the Metis depended on the buffalo hunt for their livelihood. They used the meat to make pemmican and the hides to make robes and tents. Both pemmican and hides were also traded with the



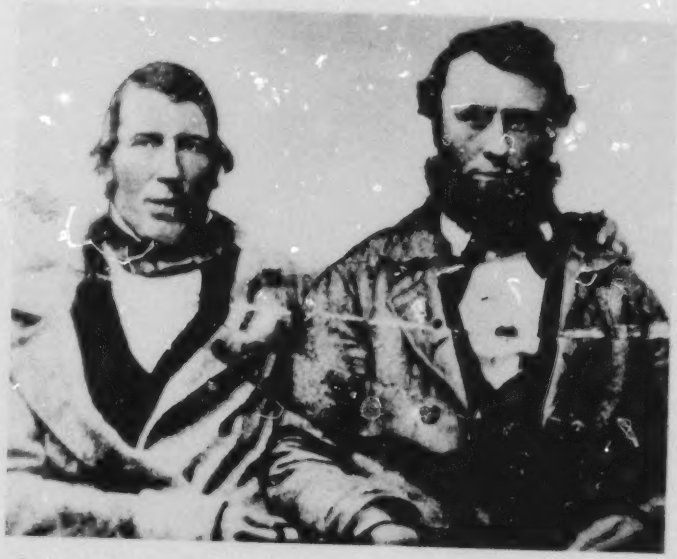
*the historical term for a person of mixed white and Indian blood

Hudson's Bay Company, which controlled trade in the area.

Louis Riel, born on October 22, 1844, near St. Boniface, was a Metis. His mother, Julie Lagimodière Riel, was a French Canadian woman who had been born in the North West. His father, Louis Riel, Sr., was the son of a French-Canadian voyageur and a Metis woman. Riel thus had mixed Indian and French ancestry and he was very proud of his racial heritage.

During the 1830's and the 1840's the Metis began to trade furs with the Americans, who offered higher prices than the Hudson's Bay Company. The Company wanted to protect its monopoly in the Red River Settlement and opposed this. Its attempts to halt the illegal trade were very unpopular with the Metis and had little effect. The dispute came to a head in 1849 when the Company arrested Guillaume Sayer and three other men for illegally trading in furs.

Riel's father played a leading role in gaining Sayer's release. He persuaded the Metis leaving the St. Boniface Cathedral to attend Sayer's trial at nearby Fort Garry "armed and fully prepared to assert their rights." He was also one of several Metis leaders who asked the court to suspend all prosecutions against the men for illegal fur trading. The several hundred armed men succeeded in influencing the court, and Sayer was released even though he was found guilty. Louis Riel was only five years old at the time of the trial. Nevertheless, he felt proud of his father's position of respect among the Metis who had stood up for their rights.



Guillaume Sayer (left) and Louis Riel, Sr.

RIEL'S YEARS IN CANADA EAST

Louis Riel did well in school. He first attended a Catholic school run by the Grey Sisters and then one run by three Christian Brothers who came from Canada East (Quebec) to Red River in 1854. In 1858, when Riel was thirteen, Bishop Alexandre Taché of Red River selected him and three other promising Metis boys to continue their studies in Canada East. Riel's parents were very religious, and no doubt they, as well as Bishop Taché, hoped that he would return to the colony as a priest. Riel prospered in his studies for over five years. In 1864, though, his father died.

Louis Riel about 1858.

The young man was very upset by this loss, and the next year he left his religious studies.

Riel eventually joined a law firm in Montreal. There he became involved in the exciting politics preceding the 1867 confederation of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. He worked for a French-Canadian nationalist who feared that French culture would not be protected within the new nation. Riel enjoyed the politics but he was too impatient with court work to become a lawyer.

Riel also fell in love with a young French-Canadian woman named Marie Julie Guernon. They secretly made plans to marry, but when Marie's parents discovered their plans they put an end to them because of Riel's Metis origins. Stung by this rejection, Riel moved to the United States where he worked for nearly two years.

RIEL'S RETURN TO THE RED RIVER SETTLEMENT

When Riel returned to St. Boniface in July 1868 he was the best educated Metis in the community. He also inherited his father's reputation as a fighter for his people's rights. Before long he found himself involved in a major confrontation between the Metis and the new Canadian government led by Sir John A. Macdonald.

Macdonald knew that the Americans were interested in the vast territory known as Rupert's Land which was owned by the Hudson's Bay Company. If it were to be saved for Canada, his government would have to act quickly. He therefore started to negotiate its purchase with the Company. Unfortunately he did not consult the

Metis who lived in the Red River area, and they were naturally upset. They did not legally own the land on which they lived, and they were afraid they might lose it if the settlement became part of Canada.

The Metis also feared that their language and religion might be lost if a large number of English-speaking Protestants from Ontario moved to the area. During Riel's ten-year absence from the Red River Settlement a small but increasingly important group of English-speaking Canadians had settled at Portage la Prairie, west of Fort Garry. Others had settled at the village of Winnipeg near the fort. These people were very unpopular with the Metis because of their superior attitude and their boasts of the changes they would make once the Canadian government took over the North West.

In 1868 the anxiety of the Metis increased when Macdonald sent a group of workers from Ontario to the settlement. These men were to build a road from Fort Garry to Lake of the Woods to better connect Red River with Canada. Metis concern continued to grow in the fall of 1869 when Macdonald sent a group of surveyors to the area to survey the land for settlement. He even sent the new lieutenant-governor of the territory, William McDougall, to Red River to take office. McDougall had no right to do so since the transfer of the Hudson's Bay Company's land to Canada had not yet been completed.

CONFRONTATION WITH OTTAWA

The arrival of the surveyors and the expected arrival of the lieutenant-governor finally aroused the Metis to take action. As his father had in 1849, Louis Riel spoke to his people from the steps of the St. Boniface Cathedral. When the Canadian surveyors attempted to do their job, Riel and eighteen Metis followers stopped them by standing on their surveying chain. They sent a note to McDougall forbidding him to enter the area without their permission, and barricaded his route to Fort Garry, stopping him from entering the colony.

The Council of Assiniboia at Fort Garry was the weak but legal government of Red River. When it challenged

Riel stops the survey at Red River in 1869.

the Metis action. Riel stood his ground. The Metis, he said, objected to any government coming from Canada without consulting them first. They wanted to send delegates to negotiate with the government before admitting the lieutenant-governor. In the face of Riel's determination, the council fell apart. The Hudson's Bay Company was equally powerless as its governor was ill and could not take part in the events that followed.

Early in November, Riel occupied Fort Garry with 120 of his men. When it became apparent that the Canadian supporters of McDougall were prepared to take up arms against the Metis, Riel acted again. He surrounded the meeting place of the Canadians in Winnipeg and took forty-nine of them to Fort Garry as prisoners. The next day, December 8, 1869, he announced the establishment of a provisional (temporary) government. He then offered to negotiate a list of basic rights for the people of Red River with the Canadian government. Among these were the right to elect their own legislature and representatives in the Canadian parliament and to have the French language protected in the legislature, courts and schools.

Sir John A. Macdonald feared that the difficulties at Red River might lead to the loss of the settlement to the United States. This was a distinct possibility in 1869 as Americans were settling south of the 49th parallel and west of the Great Lakes. He therefore sent a special commissioner, Donald Smith, to Fort Garry. Smith was to explain how Canada intended to govern the country and to find out the causes of the Metis alarm. After several private and public meetings, Smith suggested that Riel send some delegates to Ottawa. Riel brought together a group of forty delegates

Louis Riel and his councillors.

(twenty elected by the French-speaking settlers and twenty by the English-speaking) to draft a new bill of rights to present to Ottawa. In addition, he established a new provisional government that had the approval of the English-speaking settlers as well as the Metis. He also agreed to release the prisoners he had taken to Fort Garry in December.

Towards the end of March 1870 three delegates were sent to Ottawa, and on May 12, 1870, Riel's efforts were rewarded. On this date the *Manitoba Act*, based on the settlers' bill of rights, passed through parliament. The small Red River Settlement was to be a province with the right to local self-government and representation in Ottawa. The rest of the North West was to be administered by the lieutenant-governor of Manitoba.

THE EXECUTION OF THOMAS SCOTT

While he was head of the new provisional government, Riel committed one fatal mistake. On February 14, 1870, an armed group of English-Canadian settlers from Portage la Prairie marched to Kildonan Presbyterian Church, a few miles north of Fort Garry. They intended to join forces with supporters from Red River, attack Fort Garry and overthrow Riel's provisional government. The death of one of their followers weakened their resolve. They therefore called off their attack and a number turned back immediately, avoiding the fort. The next morning the remaining men passed within sight of the fort while returning to Portage la Prairie; they were surrounded by Riel's men and taken prisoner. Riel wisely decided not to execute the leader of the group, Major Charles Boulton, but he was not able to ignore the taunts of road worker Thomas Scott. Scott insulted Riel's proud Metis guards and threatened to kill Riel. At Riel's order, Scott was tried before a Metis court martial. He was found guilty of insubordination and treason and condemned to death. On March 4 he was executed by a Metis firing squad.

Scott had been a white English-speaking citizen from Ontario and an Orangeman (a member of a militant Protestant society). Feelings in that province naturally ran high against Riel, a French-speaking Roman Catholic Metis. Although Sir John A. Macdonald had promised the delegates from Red River a peaceful change of government, public pressure from Ontario forced him to take action. He now sent a military expedition under Colonel Wolseley to take control of the area. He also failed to keep his promise that Riel would be pardoned for setting up a provisional government. Instead of being honoured as the founder of Manitoba, Riel was forced to flee to the United States.

The execution of Thomas Scott at Fort Garry.

RIEL'S YEARS IN EXILE

Riel remained a fugitive from 1870 to early 1875. Although he played an important role in protecting the province from a Fenian* attack in 1871 and was elected to parliament in Ottawa on three occasions, he was never able to take his seat in the House of Commons. Furthermore, the Ontario government had offered a $5,000 reward for his arrest and conviction, so that even in exile he was not safe. In 1875 he was at last granted an amnesty (a pardon for offences against the government) on condition that he stay out of the country for five years.

Riel's fear of arrest or assassination, his inability to represent his people in parliament, and his failure to find work in the United States caused him a great deal of anguish. He therefore sought comfort in religion and in what he believed to be his divine mission to help his people. In July 1875 he received a letter from Bishop Ignace Bourget of Montreal telling him: "God . . . has given you a mission which you must fulfil in all respects." He was given the same message in a vision:

> The same spirit who showed himself to Moses in the midst of the burning cloud, appeared to me in the same manner. I was stupefied. I was astounded. The voice said to me: "Rise up, Louis 'David' Riel. You have a mission to perform." I received this heavenly message with open arms and bowed head.

* The Fenians were Irish-Americans who wanted to end English rule in Ireland. They also wanted revenge for the wrongs they felt Britain had done to Ireland over the years. Attacks on Canada from bases in the United States were one way in which the Fenians planned to obtain their revenge.

Bishop Ignace Bourget.

The belief that God had chosen him to help his people was not enough to prevent a mental breakdown. Riel's American friends were forced to send him to some of his relatives in Montreal, who tried for several months to cope with his worsening mental condition. His uncle finally admitted him in March 1876 to an asylum at Longue Pointe, Quebec. In May he was transferred to another institution in Beauport, Quebec. Except for a few visits to friends, he remained there until his release in January 1878.

Riel then went to Keeseville, New York, to recover further in the home of Father Fabien Barnabé, one of the many American friends he had made when he lived in the United States. In Keeseville Riel fell in love with Barnabé's sister Evelina. Even though they were secretly engaged he did not marry her because he could not support her properly. He moved to the American west and eventually stopped writing to her. In 1881 he married a Metis woman, Marguerite Monet.

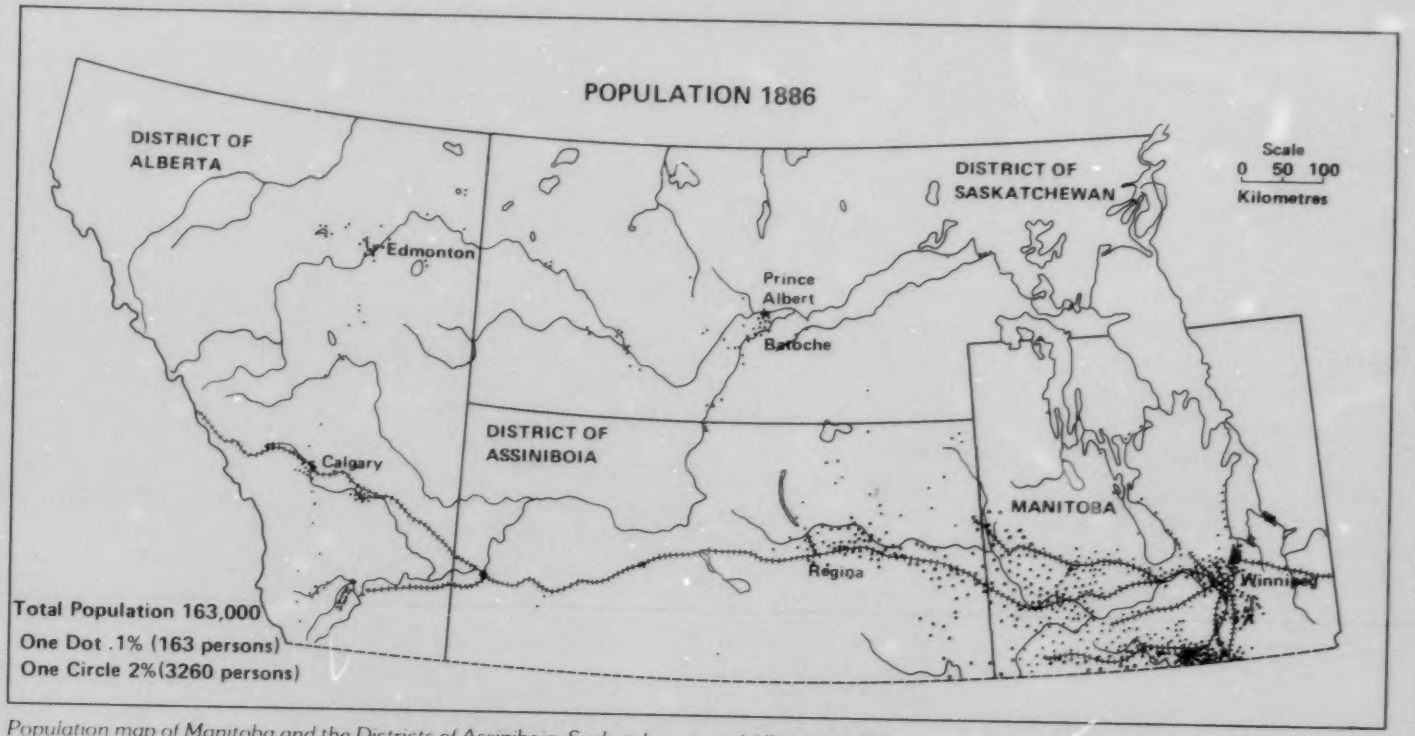
The birth of a son, Jean, in 1881 and a daughter, Marie Angélique, in 1883 helped Riel decide to work as a school teacher at St. Peter's, Montana. The small but steady income provided more security for his family than the money earned from the occasional jobs he had worked at since his return to the west. The work also fell in line with Riel's wish to help the Metis, some of whom had followed the dwindling buffalo herds into the American west. As their old way of life came to an end they found it hard to adjust to farming and other work, and poverty and alcoholism were common. Riel felt that if the children were educated they would be able to adjust to the new way of life more easily than their parents had.

PROBLEMS IN THE NORTH WEST

During Riel's years of exile in the United States, the problems of the Metis in the Canadian North West continued to grow. In spite of Riel's success in 1870, many Metis had left Manitoba and moved farther west. They had hoped to continue their old way of life and avoid the advance of white settlement. By the early 1880's, though, the buffalo on which both the Metis and the Indians depended had all but disappeared, and "civilization" was again catching up to them. The new Canadian Pacific Railway was bringing more and more white settlers to the North West, and each new arrival meant a loss of Indian and Metis hunting territory. In addition, new forms of transportation — the railway and paddlewheel steamers left many Metis without their former work of freighting goods in Red River carts.

Metis settlement in the North West was now centred on the area around Batoche. The Metis there were unhappy with the way in which the land there had been surveyed, and about delays in obtaining land titles (proof of ownership). They also felt that they were entitled to land grants because of their native ancestry.

The English-speaking half-breeds had settled down to farming before the Metis, and by 1885 the government had taken steps to deal with their land claims. However, both they and the white settlers experienced hardships. Farmers, merchants and land speculators living in communities along the North Saskatchewan River



Population map of Manitoba and the Districts of Assiniboia, Saskatchewan and Alberta in 1886.

suffered when the government decided to build the Canadian Pacific Railway to the south and not through their communities. There was a series of bad frosts and low prices for grain. The local government was ineffective and the white settlers, like the Metis, had no voice in Ottawa. All of this added to the discontent throughout the North West.

During these years the Indians suffered even greater hardships. The Metis by this time had at least some farming experience but the Indians had little or none. They had signed treaties giving up their land rights in return for permanent reserves, money and other concessions, but

few of them actually lived on their reserves until the early 1880's. Their early attempts at agriculture were frustrated by poor weather, and government rations were inadequate.

Petitions and letters to Ottawa made the federal government aware of the difficulties of these various groups in the North West. Unfortunately, the government of Sir John A. Macdonald did not seem to care about their plight, and did little to help them.

The North West at this time was governed by a lieutenant-governor appointed by Ottawa. The territorial capital was at Battleford from 1877 until 1883, and was then moved to Regina. The lieutenant-governor was assisted by a council made up of appointed and elected members. Unfortunately the council had very little power. The region did not have representation in parliament, and as a result the Canadian government in Ottawa could easily ignore western grievances. Nearly all the new settlers in the North West had come from the British Isles and eastern Canada. They were used to a more democratic form of government and, like the half-breeds and Indians, were ready to demand control over their land and government.

The North West Council meeting in Regina in 1884.

The new western newspapers reflected the mood of the people. They called for responsible government,* parliamentary representation and provincial status for the North West. One Edmonton journalist even saw rebellion as the only way to gain these rights:

> If history is to be taken as a guide, what could be plainer than that without rebellion the people of the North West need expect nothing, while with rebellion, successful or otherwise, they may reasonably expect to get their rights.

RIEL RETURNS TO THE NORTH WEST

Louis Riel had successfully led the Metis in Manitoba in a similar dispute with Ottawa in 1870. They believed he

* a government which has the power to make decisions and must be responsible to (answer to) the people for those decisions.

"I STAND FOR JUSTICE; ANSWER, SHALL I HAVE IT?"
N. W. T.—I'M GOING TO BE REPRESENTED HERE LIKE MY SISTER PROVINCES, OR KNOW THE REASON WHY!

Provincial status was one of the demands of the people living in the North West Territories.

could help them again. On June 4, 1884, while he was living in St. Peter's, Montana, a delegation from the Saskatchewan valley arrived to ask him to return to the North West. One of the group was Gabriel Dumont, the leader of the Saskatchewan Metis since 1863. Riel interpreted their request as a sign from God. Here was his chance to fulfil the mission Bishop Bourget had written about. He would take his family to Canada to help the Metis in their conflict with the federal government.

In the chapters which follow you will read about the events that then took place. You will learn how Riel tried to gain the government's attention by peaceful means, and what happened when he failed to do so. You will read about the outbreak of rebellion at Duck Lake, the way in which the Indians became involved, the battles which took place, and the final defeat and surrender of the rebels. You will also read about Riel's trial and the controversy that rose out of it.

As you read, imagine that you are a member of the jury at the trial of Louis Riel. Consider what each of the people in the book might have said if they had been witnesses at the trial, and try to judge for yourself whether Riel was guilty or innocent of treason.

IDEAS FOR PROJECTS

1. Dramatize one or more of the following short scenes from Louis Riel's life and perform them for the class:
   (a) the parents of Marie Guernon telling Riel that he cannot marry their daughter
   (b) Riel stepping on the surveyors' chain in 1869
   (c) the execution of Thomas Scott in 1870
   (d) Gabriel Dumont urging Riel in June 1884 to return to the North West
2. Prepare a series of questions on the life of Louis Riel for the television quiz show "Reach for the Top." Have one student act as a moderator and eight students (two teams of four) act as panelists. Stage the quiz in front of the class.
3. Prepare a comic strip history on the life of Louis Riel from 1844-84. (For ideas see a cartoon strip on the life of Samuel Steele on pages 18-21 of *the Heroes* by Stephen Franklin.)
4. You are an English-speaking half-breed living in Winnipeg in 1869. Write a letter to the editor of a Toronto newspaper protesting the way Sir John A. Macdonald handled Canada's acquisition of Rupert's Land.
5. Draw a cartoon showing how the people of Ontario felt about Riel in 1870. Draw a second showing how the people of Quebec or Manitoba felt about him.
6. Louis Riel should not have executed Thomas Scott. Debate or discuss this statement in front of the class.
7. Use the following quotations as inspiration for reports, class discussions or political cartoons:

"When Louis Riel took action [in 1869], he was like a man building a dike against a flood that was already irresistible."

Father Alexis André

"The French half-breeds at Red River are pertinaciously resolved to keep the North West a buffalo reserve forever."

Sir John A. Macdonald

"He [McDougall] looked at the problems confronting him from a regional point of view. As far as he was concerned, what was good for the people of Ontario was good for all of Canada — including the natives of Red River whom he was about to rule."

E. B. Osler

"I know that through the grace of God I am the founder of Manitoba."

Louis Riel

"The frontier was melting away before the onslaught of steel."

Pierre Berton

"Riel's return to Canada in 1884 once again lighted the fire under the pot of racial animosities."

George F. G. Stanley

"By 1884 the western situation was ripe for revolt . . . All that was needed to fire the explosion among the more extreme elements was a dynamic, politically-minded leader. He did not fail to appear."

Don W. Thomson

2. The Outbreak Of The Rebellion

When Louis Riel arrived in Batoche in 1884 after years of exile he was given a warm welcome by the Metis. Though some had doubts, most felt that he was just the man to help them in their fight with Ottawa. Their main problem lay in gaining title to the land they occupied but there were other matters too, and he had experience in dealing with the government.

Riel knew that other groups in the North West had complaints as well. He felt that if they united their protests the government would be more likely to listen. He therefore spoke to English-speaking half-breed and white audiences and conferred with the Indian leaders.

Working with white settler William Jackson, Riel drew up a petition listing all the grievances and sent it to Ottawa. Sir John A. Macdonald attempted to solve some of the problems brought to his attention, but Riel and his followers were not satisfied. Realizing their discontent, Macdonald increased the police force in the area.

The Metis decided to take stronger action. They seized arms and ammunition, took several men hostage, and set up a provisional government. On March 26 the rebellion began with the Battle of Duck Lake.

In this chapter you will meet:

LOUIS RIEL

Riel was the political leader of the Metis in the North West. He petitioned the government to redress their grievances and those of other unhappy groups in the North West. He led his people in rebellion against the government and was later convicted of high treason and hanged.

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD

As prime minister of Canada, Sir John A. Macdonald had confronted Riel in the Red River area in 1869-70. In the early 1880's he again was slow to act on the complaints of the people living in the North West. This led directly to the Rebellion of 1885.

CHIEF CROWFOOT

Crowfoot was a chief of the Blackfoot nation. Like the other Indians in the North West, his people suffered greatly from the extermination of the buffalo. Chief Crowfoot sympathized with the strong action taken by the Metis and by other Indian bands, but he saw that it was futile to oppose the government. He therefore kept his people out of the rebellion.

WILLIAM HENRY JACKSON

A prominent Prince Albert Liberal, Jackson helped organize the discontented groups living in the North West. He fell under the spell of Riel's leadership and worked as his secretary. After the rebellion he was tried for treason-felony but was found not guilty on the grounds of insanity.

SUPERINTENDENT LEIF CROZIER

Superintendent Crozier was in charge of the North West Mounted Police forces at Fort Carlton. He confronted the Metis, led by Riel and Gabriel Dumont, at Duck Lake and was defeated in the battle there on March 26.

READING WITH A PURPOSE

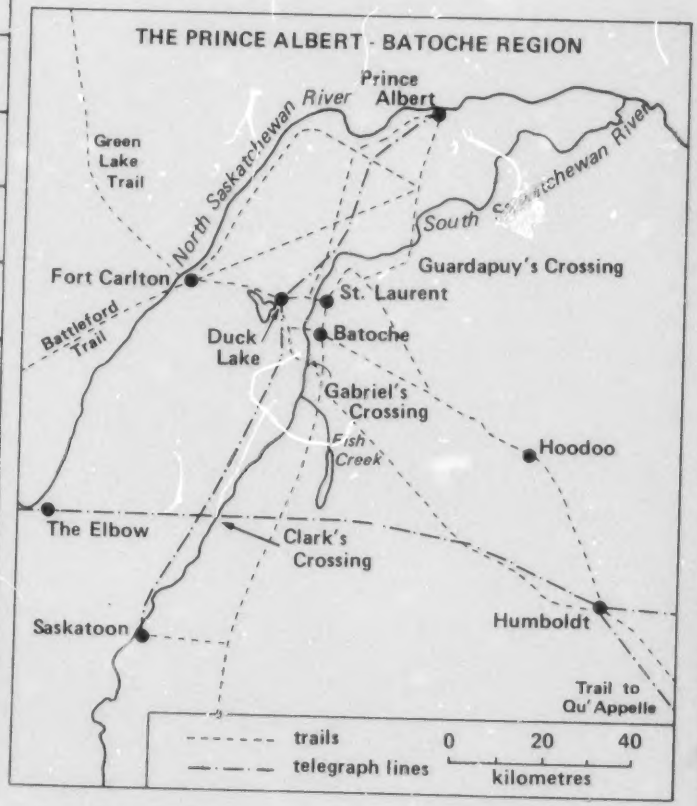
As you read this chapter do the following:

1. Refer to the timeline and map showing the events and places associated with the outbreak of the rebellion. Be prepared to explain the importance of each event.
2. Determine what each person studied in the chapter could say to help:
   (a) establish that Riel was guilty of treason in starting the rebellion
   (b) establish that the Metis and Indians had exhausted all legal methods of protest and were justified in rebelling.

   Refer to the primary source materials (letters, cartoons, maps, photographs, memoirs, etc.) found in each biography.
3. Find out how the following events contributed to the outbreak of the rebellion:
   (a) the government's failure to honour the terms of the treaties signed with the Indians
   (b) the depletion of the buffalo herds
   (c) the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway
   (d) the route followed by the Canadian Pacific Railway
   (e) the settlement of the prairies by farmers.

Timeline of Major Events

- 1884 May — Dumont leaves for St. Peter's, Montana, to ask Riel to return to Canada, May 6, 1884.
- June
- July — Riel arrives at Batoche, July 2, 1884.
- July — Riel speaks to settlers at Prince Albert, July 19, 1884.
- August — Chief Big Bear meets with Riel, August 1884.
- Sept.
- Oct. — Crozier sends a N.W.M.P. detachment to Fort Carlton, October 1884.
- Nov.
- Dec. — William Jackson sends a petition to Ottawa, December 16, 1884.
- 1885 Jan. — Macdonald promises to set up a commission on Metis land claims, February 1885.
- Feb. — Dumont and others urge Riel to stay and fight for Metis rights, February 24, 1885.
- March — Riel establishes a provisional government, March 19, 1885.
- March — Riel demands the surrender of Fort Carlton, March 21, 1885.
- March — Irvine arrives at Prince Albert with ninety police reinforcements, March 24, 1885.
- March — Dumont defeats Crozier at Duck Lake, March 26, 1885.
- March — Irvine abandons Fort Carlton, March 28, 1885.



Louis Riel

Leader of the Metis

- Was born near St. Boniface, Red River Settlement, October 22, 1844.
- Was educated by the Grey Sisters and the Christian Brothers, 1851-58.
- Trained at the College of Montreal to become a priest but did not complete his studies, 1858-65.
- Returned to the Red River Settlement, 1868.
- Established a provisional government and sent delegates to Canada to negotiate Manitoba's entry into Confederation, 1870.
- Agreed to the execution of Thomas Scott, March 4, 1870.
- Was forced to leave Manitoba and flee to the United States, August 1870.
- Was elected to Parliament in 1873 and 1874 but could not take his seat.
- Became an American citizen in Montana, 1883.
- Returned to Canada to lead the Metis, July 1884.
- Sent a petition to Ottawa outlining western grievances, December 16, 1884.
- Established a provisional government at Batoche, March 19, 1885.
- Took part in the Battle of Duck Lake on March 26 and the Battle of Batoche on May 9-12, 1885.
- Was tried for treason and executed on November 16, 1885.

Louis Riel

RIEL'S RETURN TO CANADA

Riel left St. Peter's, Montana, in early June of 1884 along with the delegates from the North West. His wife and their two young children rode in a four-wheeled wagon with Gabriel Dumont. The few things they owned were packed in a Red River cart that creaked its way toward the Canadian border.

As he rode along, Riel thought of the vision he had had so many years ago. The spirit had called him "David" then, and he had thought of himself as David ever since. In the Bible, David had been both an exile and the leader of his people; now he, Riel, was going home to lead the Metis once again

Three weeks after they had left St. Peter's, Riel and his party reached the Saskatchewan valley. They were met by cheering crowds at Fish Creek and at Batoche, the Metis centre on the South Saskatchewan River. A few days later Riel spoke at a public meeting there and urged the Metis to work with the English-speaking half-breeds for their common good.

Riel was soon invited to address English-speaking settlers in Prince Albert. He was not at all sure of his welcome, but he need not have worried. His moderate views, his plea for unity, and even the way he spoke won him a good response. During the summer he also met with Chief Big Bear and other Indian leaders and promised to work on their behalf as well.

For over five months Riel strove to unite the various groups and to draw up a petition listing all their complaints and making several requests. The key demand was for provincial status for the District of Saskatchewan. The petition was sent to Ottawa on December 16, 1884.

Riel also made a personal claim of $35 000 against the government. He felt that even more than this was owed him for his political efforts since 1869 and for land he should have received in Manitoba. The government refused to pay him any compensation.

RIEL LOSES SUPPORT

Despite his great achievement in drawing up the petition, Riel had cause for concern. He had won the hearts and loyalty of the Metis, but he had also lost some of the support he once had. The priests, for example, had now turned against him. They did not like the way he claimed to be a prophet sent by God to help the Metis, and they were worried by his growing religious power over the people. The priests also feared that he would upset their own friendly relationship with the Canadian government.

The newspapers, which had once supported the unhappy groups in the west, also drew back. They saw Riel's growing power and were alarmed by his talks with the Indians. Fearing a rebellion, they opposed Riel and supported the government.

RIEL INCREASES HIS EFFORTS

Events were brought to a head early in February 1885. On February 8 Riel heard that the government would set up a commission to consider the Metis land claims. The commission would deal with only one of the Metis

grievances and would be a long time completing its work. Riel could either accept this action as satisfactory and return to the United States, or he could stay and increase his efforts.

On February 24 Riel held a meeting at Batoche to discuss the matter with his followers. In a fiery speech he summed up the situation and proposed to return to the United States. The people shouted for him to stay and fight for their rights.

Riel decided that a show of force was necessary. On March 2 he met with one of the priests, Father André, and asked him to approve the formation of a provisional government. André knew that this was now illegal. Although the Canadian government had not controlled the North West in 1869, it did in 1885. He refused to give Riel his blessing and asked the angry Riel to leave his house.

On March 5 the leading Metis met with Riel and their old leader, Gabriel Dumont. Together they drew up and signed a pledge to take up arms "whenever it shall be necessary." Although Riel himself did not like the thought of violence, Dumont was quick to call for the use of force.

Several days after the talk with André, Riel met with his cousin Charles Nolin to ask for his support of a provisional government. Nolin was not in favour of it. He proposed that a novena (nine days of prayer) be held before a decision was made. Riel reluctantly agreed to the delay. This gave one of the priests a chance to preach a sermon against the use of force; he also threatened to withhold the sacraments from anyone who supported an armed uprising. Riel interrupted the sermon to denounce the priest, and the people supported Riel.

The federal government then made what the Metis took to be the first aggressive move. According to a rumour, Macdonald was sending 500 police to arrest Riel and the other leaders and disperse their followers. (This was not the case, but on March 15, 100 Mounted Police were ordered to march from Regina to Prince Albert.)

Riel and Dumont immediately took action in self-defence. On March 18 they took an armed party of sixty men to a small store at Batoche and seized its stock of arms and ammunition. They also took two customers hostage. Later in the day they took similar action at another store in the area and cut the telegraph line to Prince Albert. Riel and his followers were now committed to a serious confrontation with Ottawa.

On March 19 a provisional government was formed with headquarters at Batoche. Gabriel Dumont was chosen to head the army and he named the councillors. Riel rejected pleas from the priests, white settlers, half-breeds, and even some of the Metis to stop the rebellion.

Dumont suggested that they ask the Indians for help in attacking Fort Carlton. Riel held him back, as he wanted to capture the fort without bloodshed and take the people hostage. He then sent messengers to negotiate with Superintendent Crozier for the surrender of the fort. Crozier, in the best North West Mounted Police tradition, refused; he stalled for time while waiting for the police who were on their way from Regina.

The Battle of Duck Lake, March 26, 1885.

THE BATTLE OF DUCK LAKE

On March 26 Crozier led a large force out of the fort to get supplies from a store at Duck Lake. This was a grave mistake. A smaller group had been turned back by Dumont earlier in the day and now the Metis were out in force.

Riel was with his people. At first he hoped to surround Crozier's men and take hostages without a battle. When the police fired the first shot, Riel ordered his men to fire back. The first blood in the rebellion had been shed. During the fighting Riel was "armed" only with a large cross which he held aloft while sitting on his horse.

The Metis killed or wounded a number of police and forced them to retreat. Dumont wanted to attack the retreating police but Riel refused to allow this. During the battle Dumont himself received a bad head wound. Riel had his men tie Dumont to his horse and take him to safety.

THE INDIANS JOIN THE REBELLION

Riel had hoped to achieve his goals without bloodshed but those hopes were now dashed. He had also lost the support of the white residents and the English-speaking half-breeds, who would not join an armed rebellion. On

A cartoon which appeared several weeks after the Battle of Duck Lake and the burning of Fort Carlton.

the other hand, the more warlike Indian bands in the North West were ready to rebel. Riel and Dumont sent runners to the different bands urging them to seize forts, provisions and ammunition. In response, Chief Poundmaker's men looted Battleford and Chief Big Bear's band later killed nine men at Frog Lake and took hostages there and at Fort Pitt.

Riel's involvement of the Indians in the rebellion served one major purpose. Major-General Middleton, the commander of the Canadian militia sent to put down the rebellion, now found it necessary to divide his force into three columns. One moved against Riel, another against Poundmaker, and the third against Big Bear. This delayed Middleton's advance and forced him to proceed cautiously; it also gave Riel and Dumont time to consolidate their men and plan their defence.

BATOCHE

Dumont wanted to attack Middleton as he marched toward Batoche, but Riel wanted to wait until Middleton reached the town. God, he said, had promised him a Metis victory at Batoche. He spent most of his time there praying and passing religious laws. He even managed to turn the minds of his councillors away from thoughts of war. During this time his government proclaimed him a prophet, declared that hell would one day come to an end, substituted Saturday for Sunday as the day of worship and changed Easter to May 1. Riel even told one priest that Rome had fallen and that the bishop of Montreal was the new pope. Some people, including the priests, felt

Louis Riel under guard at Guardapuy's Crossing.

that he was insane; Riel felt that he was only providing the spiritual leadership that the priests had withdrawn from their people.

DEFEAT AND SURRENDER

On April 24 Dumont at last got his way and went to meet General Middleton's forces at Fish Creek. Riel himself stood at Batoche with his arms outstretched, praying for his success. Although neither side won a conclusive victory, Middleton's march on Batoche was stalled for over two weeks.

When Dumont fought Middleton again at Batoche on May 9-12, Riel once more sought to inspire his people. Inspiration was little defence against bullets, though, and they were at last forced to give up the fight.

After their defeat on May 12, many of the Metis fled into the countryside. Dumont escaped to the United States but Riel decided to stay and fight for his people in the courtroom. He surrendered on May 15.

Riel was sent to prison in Regina and tried there in late July. He spoke in his own defence but most of the old fire was gone. The jury was moved by what he said but not convinced. In the end he was found guilty of high treason and sentenced to die.

On November 16, pale and calm, Riel walked to the scaffold. The noose was placed around his neck, and as the priests recited the Lord's prayer he dropped through the trap to his death. "David" had fought Goliath and lost.

Sir John A. Macdonald

Prime Minister of Canada

Sir John A. Macdonald.

- Was born in Glasgow, Scotland, January 11, 1815.
- Emigrated with his family to Kingston, Upper Canada, 1820.
- Studied law and was admitted to the bar of Upper Canada, 1836.
- Was elected to parliament as a Conservative, 1844.
- Led the discussions which resulted in Confederation in 1867, and became the first prime minister of Canada.
- Negotiated with delegates from Riel's provisional government for the entry of Manitoba into Confederation, April-May, 1870.
- Persuaded British Columbia to enter Confederation, 1871.
- Persuaded Prince Edward Island to enter Confederation, 1873.
- Was forced to resign as prime minister because of a scandal over election funding, 1873.
- Lost his seat in Kingston, but was elected in Victoria, B.C., and again became prime minister of Canada, 1878.
- Received a major petition from the people in the Batoche-Prince Albert region outlining their grievances, January 5, 1885.
- Sent General Middleton to Winnipeg and activated the militia, March 23, 1885.
- Refused to recommend clemency for Louis Riel, who was executed on November 16, 1885.
- Travelled to the prairies and the Pacific coast on the recently completed railway, 1886.
- Died in Otawa, June 6, 1891.

A CANADA FROM SEA TO SEA

John A. Macdonald was a Conservative, and one of the most popular and successful politicians in Canadian history. His warm and jovial personality and amazing memory for names were a great asset to him at election time. Except for a five-year period, he was prime minister of Canada from Confederation in 1867 until his death in 1891. Macdonald also had a good deal of insight into human nature and politics. He was a born leader, and was just the man Canada needed in its early years. It is hard to imagine anyone else being so successful in bringing about Confederation and the building of a railway to the Pacific coast.

Confederation was Macdonald's first major achievement. He led the talks which brought about the union of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia to form Canada in 1867. In 1870 Manitoba became a province as well. (This was the result of Macdonald's first encounter with Louis Riel.) Macdonald had a dream, though, of a Canada that stretched from sea to sea. He was eager to bring the colony of British Columbia into Confederation, too, before it fell into American hands. With the promise of a railway as a lure, that province joined the others in 1871.

The last spike of the Canadian Pacific Railway would not be driven for another fourteen years. In the meantime, the thought that the Americans might take over the Canadian North West was always on Macdonald's mind. The North West Mounted Police, which he set up in 1873, would protect the area, but it was the railway which would connect the region to the rest of Canada. White settlers from eastern Canada would then be able to move to the North West and their farm products could be shipped to market. If the railway were to be built and the west settled, the Indians would have to be contained. Treaties must be signed with them and reservations set aside where they could live. The Metis, too, would have to accept the fact that the North West was no longer theirs alone.

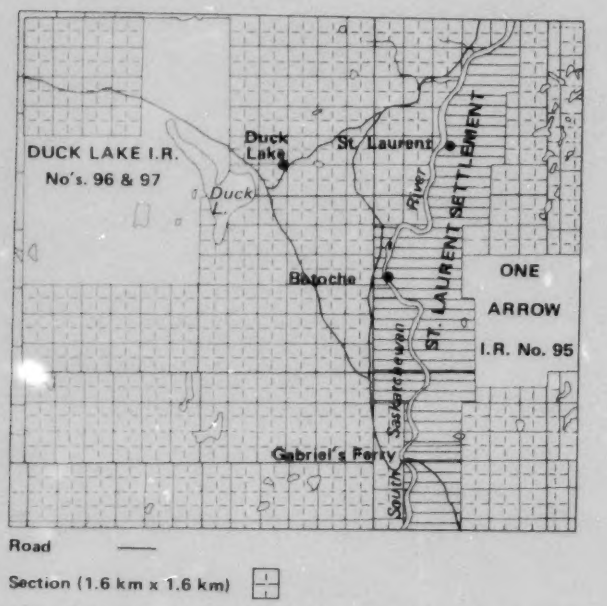
Macdonald saw that Canada could become a great country and he did much to bring this about. It was not an easy task, and in both his personal and his political life he faced many problems. Sometimes he tried to forget them by drinking. Sometimes he did nothing and hoped the problems would solve themselves, a tendency which earned him the nickname "Old Tomorrow." The Riel Rebellion was "Old Tomorrow's" most striking failure.

METIS COMPLAINTS

On March 26, 1885, Sir John A. Macdonald received news of the Metis victory over the Mounted Police at Duck Lake. He rose in the House of Commons and made this amazing statement: "We are quite unaware of the approximate cause of the half-breed rising under Riel."

As prime minister and minister of the interior for a number of years, Macdonald had received a number of petitions from the Metis and knew very well that they had many complaints. On September 4, 1882, for example, forty-seven Metis petitioned him for free grants of the land along the South Saskatchewan River which

they had settled and started to farm. They also asked that the government survey the land along the river into long, narrow lots ten chains (200 metres) in width by two miles (3.2 kilometres) in depth. This system would give all of the families some frontage on the river and the convenience of living close together. The government had surveyed lots in this way for part of the settlement of St. Laurent in 1878, but had surveyed the rest the next spring into square lots. The Metis had ignored the



A map showing the long narrow lots preferred by the Metis and the square lots preferred by the government.

government survey and set up their farms as they wished. It would have been very expensive to resurvey the land, and the government was not willing to do so.

Problems also arose because of delays in preparing a map of the area. The map was not available until nearly five years after the survey was done, and until it was, the Metis could not apply for title to their land. This increased their frustration. The whole system of land ownership and registration was very complex and most of the Metis were illiterate. Even well-educated Metis such as Charles Nolin misunderstood some of the rules, and their petitions were not always based on solid fact.

Another cause of discontent among the Metis was the government's delay in giving them grants of land based on their aboriginal (native) rights. The Metis in Manitoba had been given such grants in 1870, and those living in the North West expected a similar settlement. Macdonald delayed giving them grants as many of the Metis in Manitoba had sold their grants to land speculators, and some had spent their money foolishly. Macdonald hoped that as the Metis became better acquainted with farming they would be less likely to sell their land.

In addition to their problems concerning land, the Metis wanted the government to provide schools, to help them buy machinery, seed and grain, and to give contracts for work in the North West to residents. Finally, they requested responsible government for the region, as Manitoba had been given in 1870.

MANY WARNINGS RECEIVED

Macdonald had also heard of the Metis grievances from other sources. Between 1878 and 1884 he received many urgent appeals that he act to solve their problems. These came from priests, government employees, newspaper editors, politicians, and private citizens. On January 16, 1883, for example, Father Alexis André wrote to the government. He warned that its disregard of the Metis requests for new surveys was causing division and discord among the people. It would, he said, "render the Government odious in their eyes, considering it as guilty of a gross injustice towards them."

Macdonald realized that the Indians and Metis faced difficult problems, but he felt that time and a few good harvests would reduce the discontent. In August 1884 he wrote:

> the true policy is . . . to encourage them to specify their grievances in memorials and send them with or without delegations to Ottawa. This will allow time for the present effervescence to subside, and on the approach of winter the climate will keep things quiet until next spring.

Macdonald's friends and advisors continued to warn him of what would happen if he did not act. In August 1884 his minister of public works visited Regina. He reported:

> Riel is still at Prince Albert and is a permanent danger. However, we must take care not to make a martyr of him, and thus increase his popularity. Some concessions to, and good treatment of, the half-breeds will go a long way to settle matters.

On September 19, 1884, Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney informed him:

> Riel has no good will towards yourself or your government. If the half-breed question is arranged this winter, it will settle the whole business; if not, a good force in the North will be necessary.

MACDONALD RESPONDS AT LAST

In late January and early February of 1885, Macdonald finally responded to the years of agitation. The government did not agree to resurvey the rest of the land around St. Laurent but it did agree to let the Metis apply for title to their river lots. Letters explaining this were sent out to most of the Metis and should have reached them by late February or early March. Macdonald also decided to set up a commission to look into the Metis and half-breed land claims. Unfortunately he did not immediately appoint the members of the commission and did not explain the form any settlement would take. In any case, the government's actions came too late. The people were confused by the whole affair and felt that they had not been treated fairly. They could not be soothed by a few last minute concessions.

Macdonald may have been slow to respond to the Metis complaints but he was quick to respond to signs of unrest. Between March and December of 1884, he increased the number of police in the Saskatchewan District from 78 to 200. On March 15, 1885, he ordered 100 men from Regina to Prince Albert, and on March 23 he activated a number of militia units.

MASTER OF THE SITUATION

Before the rebellion many Canadians were reluctant to give the C.P.R. another subsidy to finish the railway.

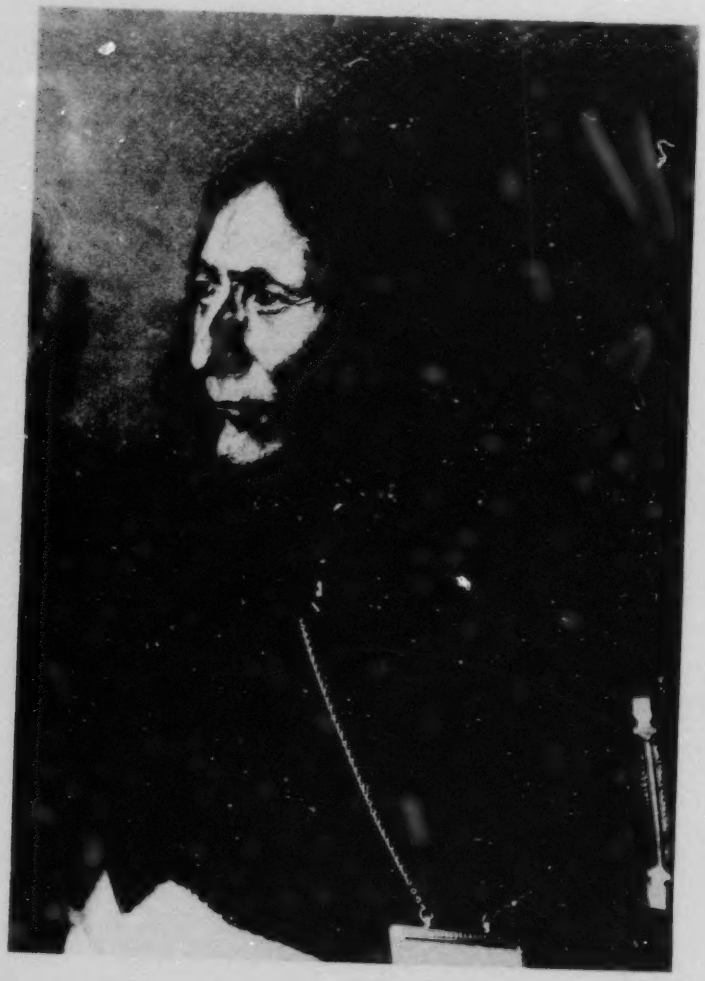
Before the outbreak of the rebellion Macdonald's main concern had been to find financing for the Canadian Pacific Railway. Once the rebellion broke out this problem at least was solved. The Canadian public now supported the railway because it could be used to rush troops to the North West. Macdonald did not deliberately neglect the Metis grievances until they resulted in violence, but he did take advantage of the outbreak to further the cause of the railway.

Macdonald did not visit western Canada until after the Rebellion of 1885. He remained unaware of the contributions which the Metis people had made to Canadian history. Many people in the east thought that the Metis were an uncivilized and shiftless race, and Macdonald likely held this view himself. He did not seem to see them as pioneers in their own right or as people with a prior claim to the land. Occupied as he was with other problems, he saw them as a troublesome fringe group living on the frontier, far from Ottawa. On February 23, 1870, he confided to a friend: "These impulsive half-breeds . . . must be kept down by a strong hand until they are swamped by the influx of settlers." This appears to have been his main theme in dealing with both the Metis and the Indians from 1878 until 1885. "If you wait for a half-breed or an Indian to become contented," he said, " you may wait till the millennium."

If Macdonald had little sympathy for the Metis, he had even less for their leader, Louis Riel. The jury which found Riel guilty recommended him to the mercy of the Crown but Macdonald made no move to stop the execution. There was much pressure on him to do so, especially from Quebec, but the prime minister could not be swayed. As Macdonald himself put it: "He shall hang though every dog in Quebec bark in his favour."

Chief Crowfoot

An astute Indian chief



- Was born into the Blood tribe, Belly River, in what is now Alberta, 1830.
- Became a member of the Blackfoot tribe when his widowed mother married a man from that tribe, 1835.
- Lost his only healthy son during a raid on the Crees, and adopted a Cree named Poundmaker who resembled his dead son, 1873.
- Rejected a plea from Chief Sitting Bull to join the Sioux in their fight against the U.S. government, May 1876.
- Signed Treaty No. 7 at Blackfoot Crossing, September 22, 1877.
- Went south to the United States in search of the buffalo, 1879-81.
- Met Louis Riel on two occasions but decided not to support him in his plans to set up a self-governing Indian and half-breed nation, 1879 and 1880.
- Agreed to let the Canadian Pacific Railway build its line past his reserve, 1883.
- Promised to remain loyal during the rebellion, March 30, 1885.
- Lobbied for the pardon and release from prison of Chief Poundmaker, 1885-86.
- Was granted a lifetime pass on the Canadian Pacific Railway as a reward for his loyalty, 1886.
- Died at Blackfoot Crossing, April 25, 1890.

Isapo-muxika (Chief Crowfoot).

THE TREATY

At the time of the Rebellion of 1885 the three best known Indian chiefs in the North West were Crowfoot, Big Bear and Poundmaker. Of these, only Chief Crowfoot of the Blackfoot tribe managed to keep his people out of the rebellion.

Crowfoot's success in staying out of the dispute was the result of a well thought-out policy. As early as 1876 he saw the problems which would soon face his people:

> We all see that the day is coming when the buffalo will all be killed, and we shall have nothing more to live on . . . then you [the Mounted Police] will come into our camp and see the poor Blackfoot starving. I know that the heart of the White soldier will be sorry for us, and they will tell the great mother [Queen Victoria] who will not let her children starve.
>
> We are getting shut in. The Crees are coming in to our country from the north, and the white man from the south and east, and they are all destroying our means of living . . . We will depend on you to help us.

Crowfoot's confidence in the government was due to the work of the North West Mounted Police who arrived in his territory in 1874. Their equal and just handling of both Indian and white lawbreakers coincided with his own sense of fairness. They did him an immense favour by stopping the whiskey trade, and put an end to the inter-tribal warfare and horse stealing that had been common. When he signed Treaty No. 7 in 1877 Crowfoot explained his debt to the police:

> If the Police had not come to the country, where would we all be now? Bad men and whiskey were killing us so fast that very few, indeed, of us would have been left today. The Police have protected us as the feathers of the bird protect it from the frosts of winter.

Chief Crowfoot addressing Lieutenant Governor Laird at Blackfoot Crossing at the time of the signing of Treaty No. 7, 1877.

The first chief to sign the treaty, Crowfoot promised: "I have been the first to sign; I shall be the last to break."

Crowfoot may have been the first chief to sign the treaty, but he was not a "government Indian." He was as skilled a politician as any Ottawa had to offer. He refused to meet at the North West Mounted Police post at Fort Macleod for the signing of Treaty No. 7. Knowing the value of negotiating on one's home territory, he insisted that the meeting take place in his own domain. He refused to accept gifts of food for his people until he had heard the terms of the treaty. He also tried to persuade the

Blackfoot and Blood tribes to take reservations adjoining one another as this would increase their military and political power.

In return for giving up their rights to a large area of land (about 130 000 km²) the Blackfoot were granted about 0.5 square kilometres of reserve land for each individual. Each Indian was also to be given a small sum of money each year. Cattle and farming tools were promised, as well as food until they could support themselves by farming or ranching. The tribe was given ammunition and had permission to hunt in the area providing they did not disturb other people. The treaty terms were to last "as long as the sun shines and the rivers run."

Assiniboines hunting buffalo.

ON THE VERGE OF STARVATION

The willingness of both sides to live up to the terms of the treaty was soon tested. Neither Crowfoot nor the government realized that the buffalo would virtually disappear from Blackfoot territory in southern Alberta as early as the winter of 1878-79. The growing number of white settlers played a part in this. So did the demand for buffalo robes and the introduction of the repeating rifle. Many of the shaggy beasts were slaughtered by men who took only the hides and left the meat to rot in the prairie sun.

Like the Metis, the Indians had depended on the buffalo for food, clothing and shelter. Now that the herds were gone how were they to live? Only the food promised by the government could save them from starvation.

In mid July of 1879 the new Indian commissioner, Edgar Dewdney, finally arrived at Blackfoot Crossing with some food. He later wrote:

> I found about 1,300 Indians in a very destitute condition, and many on the verge of starvation. Young men who were known to be stout and hearty fellows some six months ago were quite emaciated and so weak they could hardly work; the old people and widows, who with their children live on the charity of the younger and more prosperous, had nothing, and many a pitiable tale was told of the misery they had endured.

Dewdney did what he could to meet the tribe's immediate needs and then sent them to the United States where a buffalo herd still remained. There they suffered terribly at the hands of the American whiskey traders who offered alcohol in return for furs.

Blackfoot Indians receiving rations.

When the buffalo became scarce in the United States Crowfoot appealed to Dewdney to feed his people. Dewdney advised them to remain where they were as he saw no means of feeding them if they returned. Crowfoot spent another disastrous year hunting before he was forced to return to Canada

With their best horses stolen or traded for whiskey, most of the Blackfoot walked back to Fort Macleod. Many starved or died of diseases on the way, and the Indian agent at Fort Macleod reported that they returned in a most destitute condition. Between 1879 and 1881 at least 1 000 Blackfoot perished.

GROWING DISCONTENT

The Indians were now almost completely dependent on the government for food and there was much discontent. Farming instructors were sent to teach them to grow their own crops and raise cattle, but they could not become good farmers overnight. They were also plagued by grass fires that destroyed much of their grazing land. These were started by sparks from the trains that passed by the reserve, and the Indians were not compensated for this loss.

In 1883-84 the government reduced the Indians' rations as an economy move, and pork was frequently issued instead of the promised beef. Other cuts were made as well, and the Indian agents and farm instructors lost the power they once had to make decisions on their own.

Buffalo bones used in making fertilizer and other products.

Cecil Denny, the Indian agent, resigned in disgust.

Crowfoot was also upset by the changing attitude of the government employees and the police. Both groups were showing less respect and more arrogance as time went by. In 1882 a dispute arose between a government employee and a minor chief named Bull Elk. The employee accused Bull Elk of stealing a steer's head, and the Indian took a few pot shots at his accuser. Without any inquiries the police took the side of the employee and arrested Bull Elk. The Indians, who felt that Bull Elk was justified in his actions, mobbed the police and forced them to release the prisoner. Bull Elk was placed in Crowfoot's care until a magistrate could come to try the case. In his haste to restore the prestige of the police, Superintendent Crozier rushed to the scene and re-arrested Bull Elk. He was taken to Fort Macleod and given a fourteen-day sentence. Crowfoot lost much of his respect for the Mounted Police because of this incident.

ON THE BRINK OF REBELLION

In 1884 the police drove Crowfoot to the brink of rebellion. When Louis Riel returned to Canada, he sent a Metis named Bear's Head to get the support of the Blackfoot. The police harrassed Bear's Head and tried to prevent him from visiting Crowfoot. When he escaped their custody and sought refuge on Crowfoot's reserve, the police sent Inspector Steele to arrest him. Although a sacred Sun Dance ceremony was in progress, Steele barged into Crowfoot's lodge and arrested his guest for vagrancy. This was a charge Crowfoot could not understand. He lost his temper and made a rush toward Steele, who threatened to use his gun. The arrest was made but four days later the Metis was acquitted of all charges.

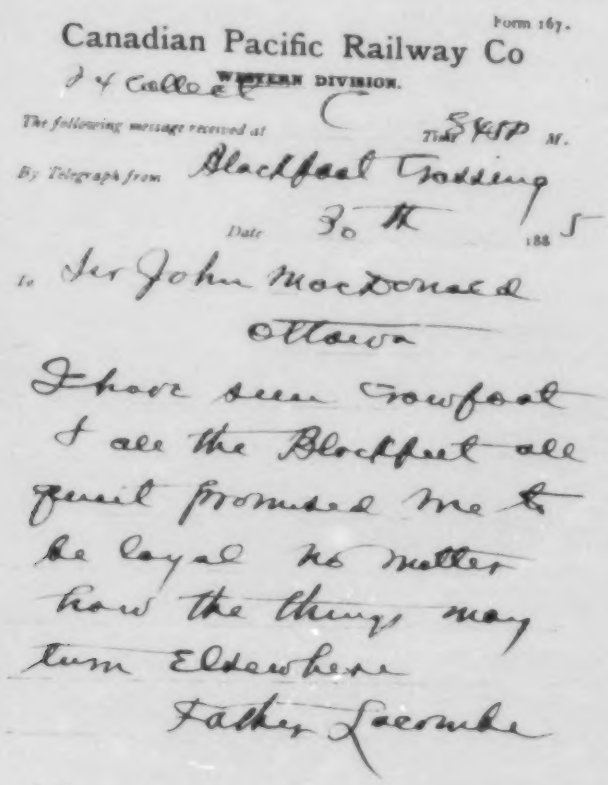
For many years Crowfoot had remained loyal to the government and had refused to join an Indian and Metis movement proposed by Louis Riel. His defiance of the police in 1884 could easily have become a turning point. Edgar Dewdney, now lieutenant-governor of the North West Territories, realized this. He sent Crowfoot and four other chiefs to Winnipeg by rail so that they could see the wealth and power of the white people. The sight of the city of more than 15 000 people greatly impressed Crowfoot. He saw that he could not win a war against the government, and this renewed his resolve to stay out of any fighting that might occur.

CROWFOOT STAYS OUT OF THE REBELLION

Soon after the Battle of Duck Lake on March 26, 1885, Dewdney acted quickly to more than double the food rations of the Blackfoot tribe. Dewdney and a priest, Father Lacombe, also visited Crowfoot to encourage him to remain loyal. Following this meeting, Crowfoot had Father Lacombe send Sir John A. Macdonald a telegram promising that the Blackfoot would remain loyal to the Queen.

Sir John A. Macdonald and the Canadian public were greatly relieved by this message. The public had been shocked by the success of the Metis at Duck Lake and the apparent support of Big Bear and Poundmaker for the

Telegram from Father Lacombe to Sir John A. Macdonald, March 30, 1885.



Form 167.

Canadian Pacific Railway Co

WESTERN DIVISION.

The following message received at Time 5.45P M.

By Telegraph from Blackfoot Crossing

Date 30 Mr 85

To Sir John Macdonald

Ottawa

I have seen Crowfoot & all the Blackfeet all genl promised me to be loyal no matter how the things may turn Elsewhere

Father Lacombe

rebel cause. They knew that if Crowfoot entered the conflict the rest of the Indians in the North West would likely join Riel's forces.

During the rebellion Crowfoot welcomed Cree and Metis refugees to his camp. He knew why they had rebelled and his sympathies were with them, but he knew they had no chance of victory. Because of this he continued to stay out of the conflict.

A NATIONAL HERO

Crowfoot was known across the plains as a brave man. In his youth he had fought nineteen battles and been wounded six times. He had also speared to death a grizzly bear which attacked a boy who was picking berries. His unwillingness to fight was due not to any lack of courage but to his love for his people. Their old way of life was gone and nothing would bring it back; they would have to make a new one with the government's help. If loyalty to the Queen would buy them life, then he, Crowfoot, would be loyal.

So it was that this shrewd Indian chief, admired by Indians and whites alike, became a national hero.

William Henry Jackson

A champion of the underdog

- Was born in Toronto, Ontario, May 3, 1861.
- Attended University College, University of Toronto, for three years.
- Moved to Prince Albert with his parents, obtained a land grant, and became a farmer, 1882.
- Worked in his father's business, selling farm implements, 1883.
- Assisted Louis Riel on his return to Canada and became his personal secretary.
- Issued a manifesto criticizing the government, July 28, 1884.
- Worked with Riel in the summer and fall of 1884 to draw up a major petition which was sent to Ottawa on December 16, 1884.
- Served briefly as secretary of Riel's provisional government, March 1885.
- Was tried for treason-felony and found not guilty on the grounds of insanity, July 24, 1885.
- Was admitted to the Selkirk Lunatic Asylum in Manitoba in August 1885 but soon escaped and fled to the United States.
- Worked most of his life as a labour organizer and lecturer in Chicago and New York.
- Died in New York, January 10, 1952.

William Henry Jackson.

A CHAMPION OF THE UNDERDOG

The North West was rife with discontent when William Jackson arrived in Prince Albert in 1882, and he was soon agitating on behalf of the farmers. He was an idealist, brought up in a religious home, and he believed in helping those in need. He was also a militant Liberal with an extreme dislike of Sir John A. Macdonald and the Conservative party. In emotional speeches he often denounced Macdonald's neglect of western Canada.

In 1883 the twenty-two year old Jackson published three issues of an anti-government newspaper called *The Voice of the People*. In the same year he was expelled from the Agricultural Society, a group that was far too conservative to suit him. He soon joined other more radical members of the community in forming the Settlers' Union and became its secretary.

Jackson knew that many groups in the North West had problems and that all of them felt neglected by the government in Ottawa. He thought that by working together they might be able to make the government pay heed to their complaints. He therefore sought to persuade the other white settlers and the English-speaking half-breeds of Prince Albert to support the Metis protests. He was very effective in this. Jackson also knew of Louis Riel's skill in organizing different groups and getting action from Ottawa. As secretary of the Settlers' Union he persuaded the people to join the Metis in asking Riel to return to the North West.

MERELY A HUM-BUG-BEAR!

THE EDITOR OF THE *MAIL* NOT A BIT SCARED

Many people blamed the unrest in the North West on the Liberal press.

JACKSON WORKS WITH RIEL

As soon as Riel arrived in the district in July 1884 Jackson rode to Batoche to see him. He was excited by Riel's return and stayed up all night talking to him. He spent several days with Riel and his family and was very impressed by Riel's political skills and his religious beliefs. When Riel addressed several meetings in the Metis settlements along the South Saskatchewan River, Jackson and other leaders of the Settlers' Union spoke on his behalf.

Riel was asked to address the English-speaking settlers at Prince Albert. William's brother Thomas left a letter of invitation in his store for people to sign, and Riel agreed to speak at Prince Albert on July 19. William Jackson acted as secretary at what turned out to be a large and successful meeting.

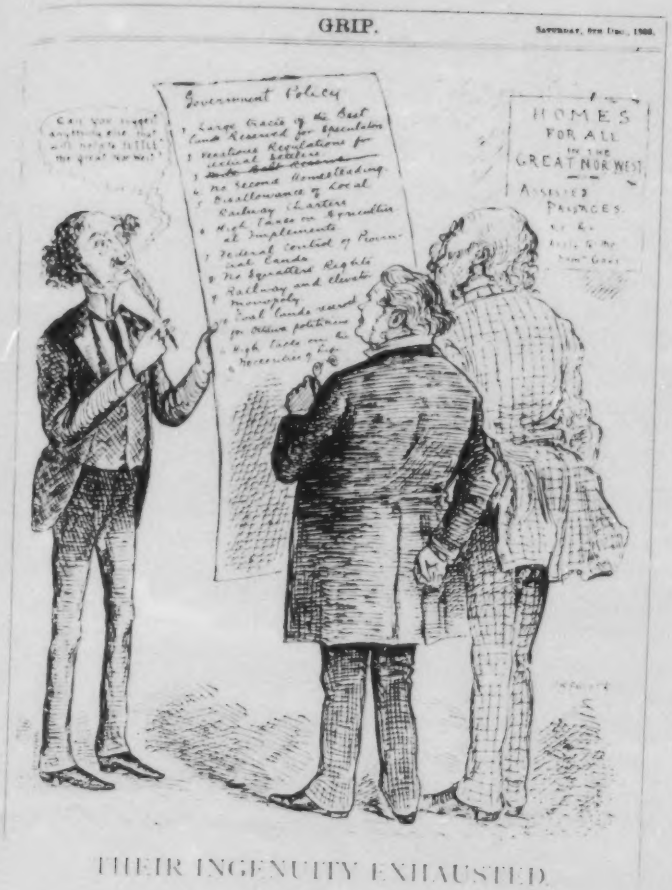
On July 28, 1884, Jackson issued a manifesto or public proclamation to the people of Prince Albert. In it he accused the federal government of supporting eastern interests, failing to understand western problems, and ignoring western demands. The root of the evil, according to Jackson, was the lack of responsible and representative government in the North West Territories. Nearly half of the territorial council was responsible to a powerful lieutenant-governor and not to the local population; the lieutenant-governor in turn was responsible only to the federal government. The people of the North West did not even have any representation in the federal parliament. The solution, Jackson wrote, was simple: "Provincial Legislatures with full control over our own resources and internal administration, and power to send a just number of representatives to the Federal Legislature." The people living in the North West would then have a voice in Ottawa, and their complaints would be dealt with.

THE PETITION

After their initial meetings with the people of the area, Riel and Jackson began to compile all the grievances into one petition. Among other things, they listed:

1. the desperate state of the Indians, who were dying from lack of food
2. the desire of the half-breeds for grants of land, similar to the grants made in Manitoba in 1870
3. the problems involved in obtaining land titles
4. the lack of a railway to Hudson Bay
5. the lack of responsible government, representation in Ottawa, and a secret ballot
6. the North West's lack of control over its own resources.

The first point is interesting. The Indians in the North West had many grievances of their own, and Riel and Jackson felt that their petition to Ottawa would have more effect if it represented this group as well. When the Crees held a meeting at Duck Lake in August, Jackson arranged for Riel to meet Chief Big Bear in the living quarters above his brother's pharmacy. At this meeting Big Bear complained that the government had broken the treaty signed with his people. Riel and Jackson agreed to help the Indians secure their rights.



A cartoon critical of Macdonald's settlement policies for the North West.

By December 16 the petition was ready to send to Ottawa. When Ottawa agreed to a few of the requests Riel spoke at a public meeting in Batoche on February 24, 1885, and offered to return to Montana. The Metis, and later the white settlers and English-speaking half-breeds, demanded that he stay and increase his efforts.

DURING THE REBELLION

On March 18 it was rumoured that Macdonald was sending troops to put down the agitation and arrest Riel. Jackson accompanied Riel from Fish Creek to Batoche and was present when the Metis seized guns, ammunition and hostages in Batoche. By this time, though, Jackson's heart was no longer in the cause. Earlier in the month he had resigned as secretary of the Settlers' Union to devote himself to the salvation of his soul, and on March 18 he was baptized into the Catholic faith. At this time he changed his name to Henri Jaxon.

In the critical period when Riel formed a provisional government and confronted the North West Mounted Police at Duck Lake, Jackson became obsessed with his own religious problems. He served briefly as secretary of Riel's new government but by March 25 the Metis were convinced he was insane. He was allowed to wander about Batoche accompanied by a guard until May 3, but from then until May 9 he was confined in a house in Batoche. With him was his brother Thomas, who had come to Batoche to get him and had been detained by Riel. On May 9 they were moved to a cellar where they stayed until the Metis defeat at Batoche on May 12.

ARREST AND TRIAL

General Middleton decided to release Jackson's brother Thomas, but after examining some papers found by his men at Batoche he arrested William. William was taken to Prince Albert along with other Metis and Indian prisoners.

When Jackson was being transferred to Regina in June, he showed signs of the insanity that the Metis had noted. On the second night of the journey, his escorts became so annoyed with him that they unshackled him, spread-eagled his limbs, staked him down with tent pegs, and threw a blanket over him. On the fourth day they again lost their patience and shackled him so close to the floor of the wagon that he was "biting and clawing like a mad dog." On the fifth day out, his guards decided to give him a bath. They led him to a lake, stripped him and started to scrub him with a horse brush. Jackson responded by swimming into deeper water, making faces, pretending to drown and running naked across the prairie. The guards thought that Jackson was deliberately acting the part of a lunatic.

Jackson was put on trial for treason-felony. He freely confessed his part in the rebellion and stated that he wished to share the fate of Louis Riel, whatever that fate might be. Jackson's family and others maintained that he was insane and the court agreed. Jackson was found not guilty on the grounds of insanity. He was sent to an asylum near Winnipeg but soon escaped and made his way to the United States.

IN CHICAGO AND NEW YORK

For many years Jackson lived in Chicago where he helped workers organize unions. He was a founding member of the radical International Workers of the World, a group known also as the Wobblies. He also worked for many years in New York. Jackson spent most of his life working for the less fortunate and became known as an "active champion of the underdog."

Jackson wanted to do something to help the Indian people as well. He spent many years and a considerable amount of money collecting books and documents for a library he hoped to build for them on some land he had in Saskatchewan. He hoped that this would help them gain an education so that they could adjust to their new way of life. When he was evicted from his New York apartment at the age of ninety, the collection made a pile on the sidewalk almost eleven metres long by three metres wide by two metres high. Jackson, now in poor health, was admitted to hospital. He died soon after, and the books and papers he had worked so long to collect were all either sold or destroyed.

DESIGN FOR THE MEDAL

A cartoon satirizing a campaign medal the Canadian government proposed to give the troops who fought in the rebellion.

Superintendent Leif N.F. Crozier

A Mounted Police Officer

- Was born in Newry, Northern Ireland, June 11, 1846.
- Moved with his family to Belleville, Ontario.
- Was appointed sub-inspector of the North West Mounted Police, November 4, 1873.
- Was stationed at Fort Walsh to watch Chief Sitting Bull, 1877.
- Refused to surrender Fort Carlton to Louis Riel, March 21, 1885.
- Fought the Metis at Duck Lake, March 26, 1885.
- Abandoned Fort Carlton and marched to Prince Albert, March 28, 1885.
- Was promoted to assistant commissioner for his bravery at Duck Lake, April 1, 1885.
- Accompanied Commissioner Irvine to Green Lake in pursuit of Chief Big Bear, June 1885.
- Retired from the North West Mounted Police after he was demoted by the new commissioner, June 30, 1886.
- Moved to Oklahoma, where he worked in a bank and later opened a general store.
- Died in Cushing, Oklahoma, February 25, 1901.
- Was buried at Belleville, Ontario, March 3, 1901.

Superintendent Leif Crozier.

A FEARLESS POLICE OFFICER

Superintendent Leif Crozier was one of the best liked and most respected officers of the North West Mounted Police. In one man's words:

> He took up his work as though he liked it, and was always happy when helping some of the boys to study for advancement, or with some of the games. When he went on a ride he was 'one of the boys', but was always respected as an officer and loved as a man.

In the years just before the Rebellion of 1885, Crozier was praised on two occasions for upholding the honour of the police. In 1882 he rushed to the aid of Inspector Francis Dickens, who had arrested a minor Blackfoot chief and then been forced by 700 warriors to release him. If the Indians succeeded in this action the image of the Mounted Police would suffer so badly that future arrests would be impossible. Crozier therefore hurried to Blackfoot Crossing with twenty men from Fort Macleod and prepared the police post for a battle. He displayed such determination that the Blackfoot eventually handed over the chief.

In 1884 there was a similar incident west of Battleford. A Cree had struck a local farm instructor and the Indians resisted the first attempt at an arrest. This time Crozier faced over 2 000 hostile and enraged Indians before making his arrest. A witness stated that this was "another of those many instances of courage, resource and determination, in the face of apparently insurmountable obstacles, shown by that gallant officer."

WARNINGS TO HIS SUPERIORS

Crozier had been in the North West for a number of years. He realized that the Indians and Metis were finding it hard to adjust to a new way of life, and he knew that they were receiving insufficient help from the government. As the man in command of the North West Mounted Police in the North Saskatchewan region, Crozier was well aware of the events leading up the the Rebellion of 1885. Police officers at Fort Carlton, Fort Pitt, Prince Albert and Battleford reported directly to him as did many of the people in the area. He kept his superiors up to date on events in his district and did not hesitate to pass on advice. When Sir John A. Macdonald's government reduced the Indians' supplies and rations in 1883 and 1884, Crozier warned that the move was a false economy, and could be "far the most expensive in the end."

Crozier's reports became more frequent following the return of Louis Riel to Canada, and more urgent as Riel united the discontented groups of people in the North West. On July 13, 1884, Crozier wrote to Commissioner Irvine:

> Nothing but seeing a large force in the country will prevent very serious trouble before long. If matters are allowed to drift, or if it is felt that no greater, or only a slight increase to the force at present here is made, I am strongly of the opinion we shall have the Manitoba difficulties of 1869 re-enacted with the addition of the Indian population as allies to the half-breeds.

The government did little, even when a major petition was sent to Ottawa in December 1884. On February 3,

1885, Crozier telegraphed Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney: "I urge immediate action in the matter and settlement if possible."

REBELLION EXPECTED

As Crozier had sensed, the mood of the Metis had changed. The government's eventual response — a commission to look into their claims — did little to reduce their frustration. At a meeting at Batoche on February 24, they urged Riel to stay in Canada. Riel hinted that the fight would escalate. Following the meeting Crozier again urged Dewdney to settle the half-breed grievances without delay.

When there was still no settlement, Riel prepared for an armed rebellion. On March 11 Crozier sent Irvine a telegram from Fort Carlton reporting on this development:

> Half-breeds greatly excited. Reported they threaten attack on Carlton before 16th. Half-breeds refuse to take freight or employment from government . . . Getting arms ready. Leader will not allow people to leave home as they may be required.

On March 14 he told Irvine that a rebellion was liable to break out at any moment, and on March 19 he reported that Riel had taken some hostages and was looting stores.

The government's major response to Crozier's reports and advice over the years was to increase the police force. By 1884 the force at Battleford had expanded from 47 to 103 men. Crozier was able to send men to other settlements where they were needed. A few went to Frog Lake and Prince Albert, and a larger force of 49 men was sent to Fort Carlton. On March 11, 1885, Crozier sent another 25 men and a seven-pounder gun to Fort Carlton. With rebellion about to break out, he asked Commissioner Irvine for 100 more police. He also asked for volunteers from Prince Albert. Forty volunteers reached Fort Carlton on March 20, and Irvine's police reinforcements and more volunteers arrived on March 26.

The increased police activity in the district added to the Metis unrest. A merchant wrote to Crozier from Batoche

Fort Carlton in 1884.

on March 20 with a warning: "The presence of a few Police just now would have the same effect as waving a red flag at an enraged bull."

DUCK LAKE

Crozier was for a while able to ignore Riel's illegal acts and his threat of a war of extermination if Crozier did not surrender Fort Carlton. On March 26, though, he unwisely sent a small detachment to pick up supplies from Duck Lake. The men were stopped about three kilometres from their destination by a larger force of volatile Metis. Realizing that they could not accomplish their mission, the group returned to Fort Carlton.

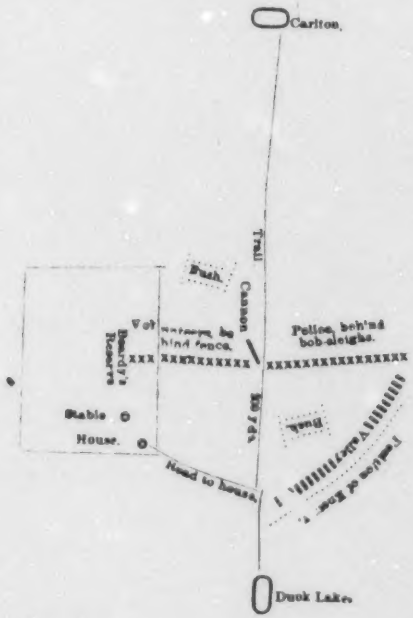
Instead of waiting for Commissioner Irvine to arrive with reinforcements, Crozier boldly led ninety-eight men with one seven-pounder gun on a punitive expedition to Duck Lake. He believed that most of the rebels were at Batoche and that he would have to fight only the small force encountered earlier. In any case the prestige of the Mounted Police was at stake.

At the same place as the men had been stopped earlier in the day, Crozier was confronted by Gabriel Dumont and a Metis and Indian force numbering about 300. Crozier ordered his men to barricade the road with their sleighs and get the cannon ready for action. In response to a white blanket waved by one of the Metis, he went forward with an interpreter to speak with a Metis spokesman and an Indian chief. While they were advancing, the rebels started to surround the police. According to Crozier, a shot was fired by the rebels

An illustration of the Battle of Duck Lake which appeared in the Illustrated War News *on April 4, 1885.*

and he gave the order to return the fire. The Metis and the Indian were killed, and Crozier and his interpreter rode back to their sleigh.

Crozier's men were in the middle of a clearing nearly surrounded by rebels who fired from the shelter of the trees and a log cabin. Most of his own men had only their sleighs for protection, though some had brought stove tops to use as shields. His cannon was too close to be effective, and it was soon put out of action by one of his own men who put the shell in before inserting the gunpowder. After half an hour of fighting, Crozier ordered



A map of the Duck Lake battlefield.

a retreat. Fortunately for the police, Riel would not let Gabriel Dumont attack them on their way back to Fort Carlton. Crozier's casualties were heavy; ten men died on the field, two died soon after, and a further eleven were wounded. Commissioner Irvine, who arrived with reinforcements soon after Crozier's dejected party returned to Fort Carlton, criticized him severely in his report.

CROZIER CRITICIZED

Crozier and Irvine soon abandoned Fort Carlton, which accidently caught fire early on the morning of the evacuation. Any buildings that did not burn then were later burned or destroyed by the Metis. Hampered by the snow and by their heavily laden sleighs, the police and volunteers marched slowly along a wooded trail to Prince Albert. Again, Riel refused to allow Dumont to attack them as they retreated.

A few days later Crozier was appointed assistant commissioner for his bravery. After the rebellion, when the truth was known about his rash decision to fight the rebels at Duck Lake, he was discredited as an officer and resigned from the force.

Crozier was not the only Mounted Police officer to be criticized for his actions in the rebellion, though ironically the other officers were charged with not showing enough vigour. One had allowed the civilians in his charge to surrender to Chief Big Bear and had then fled from Fort Pitt with his men; one had watched from the shelter of his fort while Chief Poundmaker's men pillaged Battleford; and one had been so cautious with his forces that the rebellion was over almost before he realized it. General Middleton's charge that the Mounted Police were "gophers" who ran for cover at the first sign of danger did not apply to Crozier. He had met the Metis challenge with prompt, decisive action and, to his sorrow, lost.

IDEAS FOR PROJECTS

1. View the film *The Ballad of Crowfoot*. Write a summary of the main points made in the film. What are the strong points of the film? The weak points?
2. Prepare a skit on the meeting of Chief Big Bear and Louis Riel in Prince Albert in August 1884. Present the skit to the class or videotape it and show it to the class.
3. Videotape a "You Are There" type of report on the Battle of Duck Lake. Interview people on both sides before, during and after the battle.
4. Prepare a newspaper published in Ottawa headlining the defeat of the North West Mounted Police forces at Duck Lake on March 26, 1885. Include the following:
   (a) the name and masthead of the paper
   (b) a report by a war correspondent on the fighting at Duck Lake
   (c) an editorial expressing shock at the news from the west
   (d) a letter to the editor by William Jackson warning of trouble in the North West
   (e) a political cartoon on Sir John A. Macdonald's trouble getting railway financing
   (f) exclusive interviews with Louis Riel and Superintendent Crozier
   (g) other items of your choice (news stories, advertisements, a "Dear Abigail" column, etc.)
5. Prepare for a "Meeting of the Minds" round table discussion involving four of the people in this chapter. Have one person role play each individual (appropriate costumes will make this more interesting) and have another ask questions and generate a discussion among them.
6. "Then and Now." Make a list of western Canadian grievances of 1884. Beside it make a list of western Canadian grievances today. List the actions Louis Riel and his followers took to get the federal government to take action. List the actions that you think western Canadians should take to get action from the federal government today.
7. Have a class discussion on the following topics:
   (a) When is protest necessary? What methods are legal? Illegal?
   (b) Is a citizen ever justified in using illegal methods of protest? Did conditions in the North West in 1885 justify a rebellion?
   (c) Did the Indian people in the North West have a prior claim to the land there? Did the Metis have a similar claim in 1885? Do the Indian and Metis people have legitimate land claims today?
   (d) What is progress? Was the replacement of a hunting and food-gathering society by a farming and ranching society progress? Were the eastern Canadians right in imposing their idea of progress on the people living in the North West in 1885? What were the alternatives? Are southern Canadians right in imposing their ideas on the people living in northern Canada today?
   (e) At what point should the federal government have granted the North West parliamentary representation, responsible government, and/or

provincial status? Would these measures have prevented a rebellion in 1885? Should the federal government grant the present-day Yukon and Northwest Territories provincial status?

(f) How does the depletion of a natural resource such as the buffalo in the North West in the 1870's and 1880's change the way of life of a people whose culture was based on it? How would our way of life change if we were to suddenly run out of our staple resources?

8. Use one or more of the following quotations as the basis for reports, class discussions or political cartoons:

"The entry into Batoche [on July 2, 1884] was perhaps the greatest moment in Riel's life."

Edward McCourt

"Ottawa does not intend to govern the North West so much as to plunder it."

Louis Riel

"The time has now come to rule this country or perish in the attempt."

Louis Riel

"There may have been excuses for Sir John A. Macdonald in 1869; there were none in 1885."

George F.G. Stanley

"It has been said that the C.P.R. ought to have put up a monument to Louis Riel."

W. G. Hardy

"The Metis were only doing what men should do; they were merely standing up for their rights."

E. B. Osler

3. Gabriel Dumont vs Major-General Middleton

In response to Metis unrest in the Saskatchewan District, Sir John A. Macdonald had ordered police reinforcements to Fort Carlton. He also mobilized several units of the Canadian militia. With their commander, Major-General Frederick Middleton, they proceeded to the North West.

Middleton believed that Riel's capture would end the rebellion. He planned to strike directly at the Metis centre of Batoche but the threat of an Indian uprising forced him to divide his efforts. His march on Batoche was further stalled when his men nearly walked into a Metis ambush at Fish Creek. There Middleton had his first encounter with Gabriel Dumont, Riel's military leader.

Dumont and Middleton met again a little over two weeks later. At Batoche the poorly armed Metis resisted the much larger Canadian force for four days before admitting defeat. Riel himself surrendered a few days later but Dumont escaped to the United States.

In this chapter you will meet:

GABRIEL DUMONT

For many years Dumont was the leader of the Metis living along the South Saskatchewan River. When Louis Riel returned to Canada in 1884 to become their political leader Dumont stepped aside. When the rebellion broke out in 1885 he took charge of military affairs. He led the Metis at Duck Lake and Fish Creek and organized a brilliant defence of Batoche.

MAJOR-GENERAL FREDERICK MIDDLETON

As the commander in charge of the Canadian militia, Middleton led the forces sent to suppress the rebellion. He fought Gabriel Dumont at Fish Creek and eventually defeated him at Batoche. He also organized a force to pursue Chief Big Bear.

CAPTAIN ARTHUR L. HOWARD

Howard was an American sent to Canada by the Gatling Company to demonstrate the use of two machine guns ordered by the Canadian government. He played an active role in the Battle of Batoche.

MADELEINE DUMONT

Madeleine Dumont was present in Batoche during the Battles of Fish Creek and Batoche. She nursed the Metis wounded and saw the suffering that took place in the rebel camp following the Battle of Batoche.

READING WITH A PURPOSE

As you read this chapter do the following:

1. Refer to the chapter timeline and to the map at the end of the book. Be prepared to explain the importance of major events.
2. Try to determine what each person studied in this chapter could say to help:
   (a) establish Riel's guilt in starting the rebellion or in committing treasonable acts
   (b) establish that the Metis and Riel had exhausted all legal methods of protest, were justified in rebelling, and kept violence to a minimum once the rebellion started.

   Refer to the primary source materials found in each biography.
3. Try to decide whether the Canadian militia or the Metis used better military tactics. Be prepared to refer to specific actions taken by Dumont, Middleton and Howard.
4. Try to discover the differing attitudes of the Metis and their opponents toward the Rebellion of 1885.

Timeline of Major Events

1885

March

Dumont defeats Crozier at Duck Lake, March 26, 1885.

Middleton arrives at Qu'Appelle, March 29

April

Middleton divides his forces at Clark's Crossing, April 20

Dumont stops Middleton's advance at Fish Creek, April 24

Howard and his machine gun arrive at Fish Creek, May 5

May

The paddlewheeler Northcote begins the Battle of Batoche, May 9

Middleton captures Batoche, May 12

Riel surrenders to Middleton and Dumont heads for the U.S. border, May 15

June

Middleton reaches the north end of Loon Lake in pursuit of Big Bear, June 10

Middleton joins Strange at Beaver River, June 15

July

Big Bear surrenders at Fort Carlton, July 2

Gabriel Dumont

Military leader of the Metis

- Was born at St. Boniface on the Red River, December 1837.
- Was elected leader of the Saskatchewan hunt by a group of 200 Metis hunters based near Fort Carlton, 1863.
- Was elected president of a local Metis government based at St. Laurent, December 10, 1873.
- Sent a petition to Ottawa protesting the requirement that the Metis pay for land they had already settled, September 4, 1882.
- Left for Montana to ask Louis Riel to return to Canada to help the Metis, May 19, 1884.
- Led the Metis at Duck Lake on March 26, Fish Creek on April 24 and Batoche on May 9-12, 1885.
- Fled to Montana following the defeat of the Metis forces, May 15, 1885.
- Joined Buffalo Bill Cody's "Wild West Show" in Philadelphia in June 1886 but left the show in September when the Canadian government declared an amnesty for those who had taken part in the rebellion.
- Spoke to audiences in Quebec about the rebellion and the Metis cause, 1888-89.
- Returned to the Batoche area, 1893.
- Suffered a heart attack and died, May 19, 1906.

Gabriel Dumont.

A LEADER OF HIS PEOPLE

Gabriel Dumont was the son of a leading Metis buffalo hunter, brought up in the old way of life. As a young boy he joined his father and the other men in the hunt and soon earned the respect of his people.

Dumont had a reputation for bravery that began when he was ten years old. At that age he asked his father for a rifle to help defend against an expected Indian attack. He became known too for his skills as a buffalo hunter, and at the age of twenty-five was chosen leader of the hunt by the Metis living along the Saskatchewan River.

Dumont was also a generous man. During a hunt he would donate several buffalo to the old and sick, and he shared what he had with the needy once the hunts ended. He was the one the people always turned to in times of trouble, and was loved and admired by all.

Dumont remained leader of the Saskatchewan Metis until 1884. He thus had the task of guiding his people during the difficult years when the buffalo disappeared and more and more white settlers arrived in the Saskatchewan region.

As the Metis' traditional way of life came to an end, Dumont attempted to secure land and other concessions for them. He sent letters and petitions to Ottawa but his appeals fell on deaf ears. In one emotional petition sent to Sir John A. Macdonald on September 4, 1882, he requested grants of land surveyed in the French manner into long, narrow lots. To this the government replied: "When the proper time arrives the case of each bonafide settler will be dealt with on its merits; but as regards the survey of the lands in question, all lands in the Northwest Territories will be surveyed according to the system now in force."

The "proper time" for the Metis became more urgent as settlers started to encroach on their land. When Dumont's best efforts as a politician failed, the Metis decided to send for Louis Riel, who had received action from Ottawa in 1869.

RIEL RETURNS TO THE NORTH WEST

Riel was now teaching school at a mission in Montana, and a delegation was chosen to visit him there. Dumont was one of the four men picked. They set out on their 2 200 kilometre return journey on May 19 and arrived at the mission on June 4.

Riel's surroundings showed him to be a poor man. Despite this he had continued to support the Metis cause in Montana and Canada. The delegates were deeply impressed by him and persuaded him to return with them to Batoche. Dumont was also struck by Riel's religious devotion and became very close to Riel and his family on their trip back to Batoche.

While Riel worked with the French- and English-speaking settlers to draw up a petition, Dumont stayed in the background. He had learned six Indian languages during his years on the plains and he now worked to gain the support of the Indian people. He sent envoys to talk with them and he arranged for Riel to meet Chief Big Bear and other Indian leaders while they were holding their own meetings at nearby Duck Lake. When Macdonald failed to

respond to Riel's petition in a satisfactory way, Dumont led a group who urged him to stay in Canada and continue to fight for their cause.

THE METIS TAKE UP ARMS

In March Riel and Dumont decided that a show of force was necessary. They began to recruit an armed expedition to meet at Batoche on March 19. The government was also mobilizing its forces, and on March 15, 100 North West Mounted Police were ordered to march from Regina to Prince Albert. Riel and Dumont heard a rumour that a force of 500 was on its way to arrest them; they therefore seized hostages and supplies and made plans to capture Fort Carlton. These plans were not carried out, but on March 26 the Metis fought and defeated the police at Duck Lake.

Indian and Metis at the Battle of Duck Lake, March 26, 1885.

With the Metis victory at Duck Lake the rebellion started in earnest, and General Middleton's army was soon marching north from the Canadian Pacific Railway station at Qu'Appelle. Dumont knew that the Metis' advantage lay in their knowledge of the country, and that the Canadians' major disadvantage lay in their overextended supply lines. He wanted to take hostages and conduct a strong and continuous guerrilla action against the approaching Canadian forces but Riel would not let him do so. When it was nearly too late, he finally convinced Riel that it would be better to ambush Middleton's men at Fish Creek rather than to wait for them at Batoche.

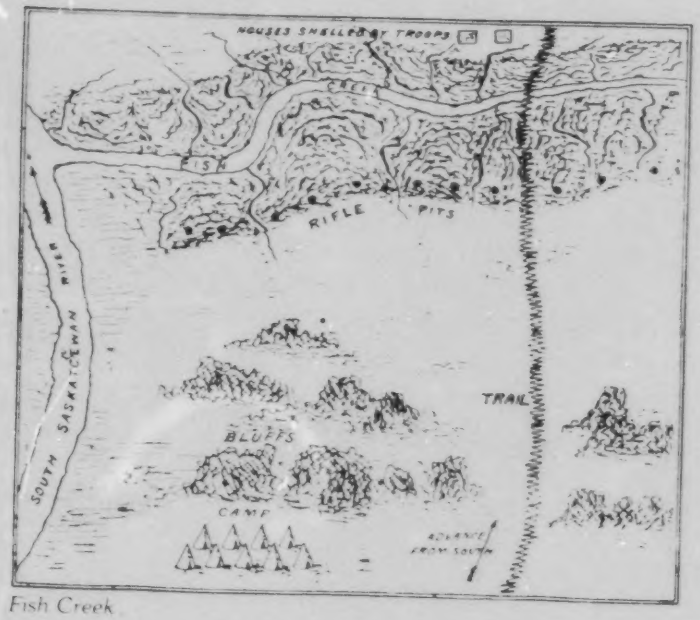
AMBUSH

Dumont knew that Middleton had already divided his force of 800 men and four cannons in half at Clark's Crossing; half were to proceed to Batoche along the west bank of the South Saskatchewan River while Middleton led the rest along the east bank. He planned to cut Middleton's group in half again at Fish Creek by letting some of them cross the creek before attacking them. At dusk on the night of April 23, Dumont and Riel started for Fish Creek with 200 men. When they heard that the Mounted Police from Prince Albert were marching on Batoche from the east, Riel returned with fifty men to protect the settlement.

Dumont positioned 130 of his men in a hollow on the south bank of Fish Creek and hid their horses in the woods. He gave orders not to fire until most of the troops

were in the coulee. "I wanted to treat them as we would buffalo," he later said. He led the remaining men to a group of trees south of the coulee where they could attack Middleton's forces when the latter tried to retreat.

Dumont's plans for an ambush failed when some of his younger men left tracks on the road from Clark's Crossing. Suspecting trouble, Middleton approached Fish Creek cautiously with his scouts spread out on a wide front, well in advance of the main column. Knowing that he could not trap the troops as planned, Dumont opened fire on the scouts.



Fish Creek

THE BATTLE OF FISH CREEK

Dumont and his men took refuge in a nearby ravine and started shooting at the advancing troops. "When they saw I was making things too hot for them," stated Dumont, "they began directing their [cannon] shots into the thicket where I was. The breaking of branches all around me warned me that it wasn't wise to stay there."

Dumont and his group rode back to the creek where only forty-seven men remained. Apparently the sight of Middleton's 440 well-armed troops had led the rest to flee. Most of the Metis and Indians carried old muzzle-loading guns which were slow and awkward to reload. They were also short of ammunition. Even Dumont's group soon dwindled to seven men.

The remaining men were in a strong position in their rifle pits at the bottom of the coulee. Middleton's men reached the edge of the ravine and attempted to fire into it. Silhouetted against the skyline, they made perfect targets for the Metis riflemen. Middleton's gunners eventually took out their frustration by firing their cannon at a house and stable on the other side of the ravine. They also fired their cannon at the Metis and Indian horses. One of the gunners recorded the slaughter:

> Down in the ravine was a lot of Indian ponies tied up to the trees and our chaps not being able to see the owners were eager to revenge themselves on the poor animals by shooting them instead. As soon as the order came to shoot the poor brutes, ye gods! what a fusilade commenced. There were about fifty ponies killed, and lead enough fired to have killed fifty hundred.

The Battle of Fish Creek, April 24, 1885.

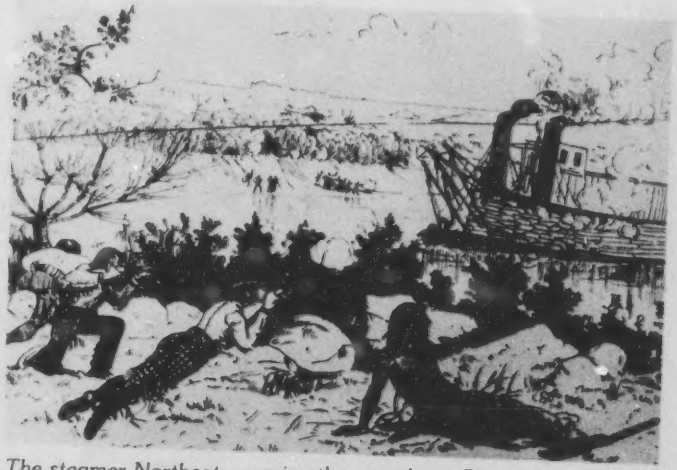
Soon after sundown Middleton decided to withdraw his forces to a camp about 450 metres south of the battlefield. In his haste to retreat, a medical officer left behind a box of medicine and two bottles of brandy. Dumont reported that the Metis drank his health.

It had rained all day and everyone was soaked and chilled to the bone. Despite the arrival of Dumont's brother with eighty horsemen, the Metis decided to return to Batoche. Though they had failed to take the Canadian forces by surprise, their heroic stand at Fish Creek did delay Middleton's final advance on Batoche by over two weeks.

THE BATTLE OF BATOCHE

As the Canadian forces moved from Fish Creek to Batoche, Riel once again told Dumont not to harass them. Although he believed that siege warfare would be suicidal, Dumont helped organize the Metis defences at Batoche. The rifle pits dug to the south and east of the village were placed in depressions and so well camouflaged that the Metis were able to hold off the advancing forces for four days. This was despite the Canadians' great advantage in numbers, arms and ammunition and their use of the Gatling machine gun. Dumont also led his men in their partly successful attack on the paddlewheeler Northcote which was used at the beginning of the battle.

The Metis defence of Batoche finally collapsed on May 12 because of a lack of ammunition and a daring charge by the militia. Dumont continued to fight until he heard that Riel had surrendered. Rather than give himself



The steamer Northcote running the gauntlet at Batoche, May 9, 1885.

up he fled to the United States where he worked for a time in Buffalo Bill Cody's "Wild West Show." He returned to Canada when the Canadian government declared an amnesty for those who had taken part in the rebellion.

As a man, one of Dumont's greatest strengths was his devotion and loyalty to his people. As a military leader, his greatest weakness was his loyalty to Riel. He was blinded by the power of Riel's personality and by Riel's claims of religious guidance. Dumont himself put it this way: "I yielded to Riel's judgement, although I was convinced that from a humane standpoint, mine was the better plan; but I had confidence in his faith and his prayers, and that God would listen to him." Because of this, he failed to respond to his own instincts until it was too late.

Major-General F. Middleton

Commander of the militia

Major General Frederick Middleton.

- Was born in Belfast, Ireland, November 2, 1825.
- Was educated at the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, England, and joined the British army in 1842.
- Served in New Zealand, India, Canada, Gibraltar, Malta and England.
- Served as commandant of the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, 1874-1884.
- Was promoted to major-general and placed in command of the Canadian militia, July 1884.
- Was sent to command the Canadian militia in the North West during the Rebellion of 1885.
- Fought the Metis at Fish Creek on April 24 and Batoche on May 9-12, 1885.
- Accepted the surrender of Chief Poundmaker at Battleford, May 26, 1885.
- Directed the pursuit of Chief Big Bear which led to the release of Big Bear's hostages and in the end to his surrender on July 2, 1885.
- Was knighted and received the Order of Knight Commander of St. Michael and St. George, 1885.
- Was forced to resign from the militia because of a scandal over the confiscation of furs during the rebellion, July 1890.
- Returned to England, where he wrote a series of magazine articles on the rebellion and served as keeper of the crown jewels in the Tower of London, 1896.
- Died in London, England, January 25, 1898.

MILITARY BACKGROUND

Frederick Middleton came from a military family. His father was a major-general in a Scottish regiment, four of his brothers were in the army, and one was in the navy. Like his brothers, Middleton distinguished himself in battle.

Middleton's most active years of service were spent in India during the Indian Mutiny. He was constantly in the thick of the fighting and on two occasions he was recommended for the Victoria Cross. By 1884 he had served for forty-three years throughout the British Empire and had spent some time in Canada. At the age of fifty-eight he returned to Canada to take command of the Canadian militia.

OUTBREAK OF THE REBELLION

When rebellion broke out in the North West in the spring of 1885, General Middleton lost no time in reaching the front. He received his orders on March 23, reached Winnipeg on March 27 and arrived at Qu'Appelle on March 28. As fast as men arrived from Winnipeg and eastern Canada they were trained and were soon marching toward Batoche. Most of the men in the militia were volunteers, and many had never even fired a rifle before. Middleton had little confidence in his inexperienced Canadian troops and little more in the Canadian officers who led them. He openly preferred British officers and "men of good birth."

Middleton believed that if he could capture Riel the rebellion would come to an end. Unfortunately he could not use all his forces to do so. Indians from Chief Poundmaker's and Chief Big Bear's bands had joined the rebellion and Middleton had to send over 900 men to other areas to deal with them. The remaining 800 men were divided at Clark's Crossing on April 20 when Middleton sent half along the west bank of the South Saskatchewan River toward Batoche and led the rest along the east bank himself.

General Middleton's column on the march toward Fish Creek.

THE BATTLE OF FISH CREEK

Middleton used local farmers to scout for him. They knew the Indians and the country, and they were able to

detect the ambush Gabriel Dumont had prepared at Fish Creek. When the enemy opened fire, Middleton immediately galloped to the front. He came across a group of mounted men led by Gabriel Dumont who quickly took cover in the Fish Creek ravine. Middleton ordered his men to dismount and extend themselves along the ravine. Before they could do so, several were hit by Metis fire. The rest threw themselves down and fired back. Middleton himself had a bullet put through his hat, and his horse Sam was grazed. The riderless horses of both sides were now galloping wildly about. Middleton later wrote: "Amidst the rattle of the rifles and the pinging of the bullets, we could hear the oaths and shouts of the excited 'Metis' mingling with the war-whoops of the Indians, the sturdy scouts [Middleton's] talking only with their Winchesters."

Two cannons used at the Battle of Fish Creek, April 24, 1885.

Middleton's men soon found that their cannon could not fire into the coulee. When they tried to shoot from the edge of the coulee into the dense brush below, they could guess where the Metis were only by watching for the smoke from their rifles. The Canadians themselves made a good target for the Metis. Middleton personally took a group of men and one gun to the other side of the ravine but he ran into the same problem. Describing one of his scouting expeditions, he said: "The fire grew so hot that I had to run for it, the bullets swishing about me in great style." By the end of the day, the small group of rebels had earned his admiration and respect for their stubborn defence.

While the fighting was going on, half of Middleton's men were still on the other side of the river. When they heard the firing they wanted to cross, but had to wait for their scow to return with supplies from Clark's Crossing. When it did arrive, they did not have time to string its cable across the wide and rapid river. Instead they had to use oars which they made from trees. They also faced the difficulty of loading and unloading among the deep mud, boulders and blocks of ice along the thirty-metre high banks. They did get 250 men and two guns across but by that time the fighting was all but over.

It had been raining all day and by 8:00 p.m. both sides decided to retire. It was now windy and snowing hard. Middleton's men camped on Fish Creek at a spot overlooking the South Saskatchewan River, and the medical staff spent the night attending to the wounded. Out of a force of about 400 men, Middleton had sixty dead and injured. Discouraged by his heavy losses, and with a

new respect for his opponents, he waited two weeks before continuing his march on Batoche. In the meantime, more men, ammunition and supplies arrived.

THE BATTLE OF BATOCHE

Middleton was unwilling to call on the North West Mounted Police at Prince Albert for assistance, and decided to attack Batoche on his own. His 850 men outnumbered Dumont's nearly four to one but he did not know this at the time. He therefore planned a diversion to divide the Metis forces. Some of his men would take the steamer Northcote and attack Batoche from one side while Middleton and the remaining men attacked it from the other. Unfortunately the steamer started out an hour early, and Dumont was able to put it out of commission before Middleton arrived. Dumont's men fired at the helmsmen and prevented them from steering the vessel. As it drifted down the river, they lowered a ferry cable and knocked off its smokestacks, spars, mast and steam whistle. The civilian captains were so shaken by these events that they refused to return to Batoche until May 12.

Middleton found the Metis even better entrenched at Batoche than they had been at Fish Creek. Once again they were positioned on sloping land which stopped his men from making good use of the cannon. They had also dug numerous well-camouflaged and protected rifle pits just below the ridge of land surrounding Batoche. The Canadians found it hard to attack an enemy they could not see.

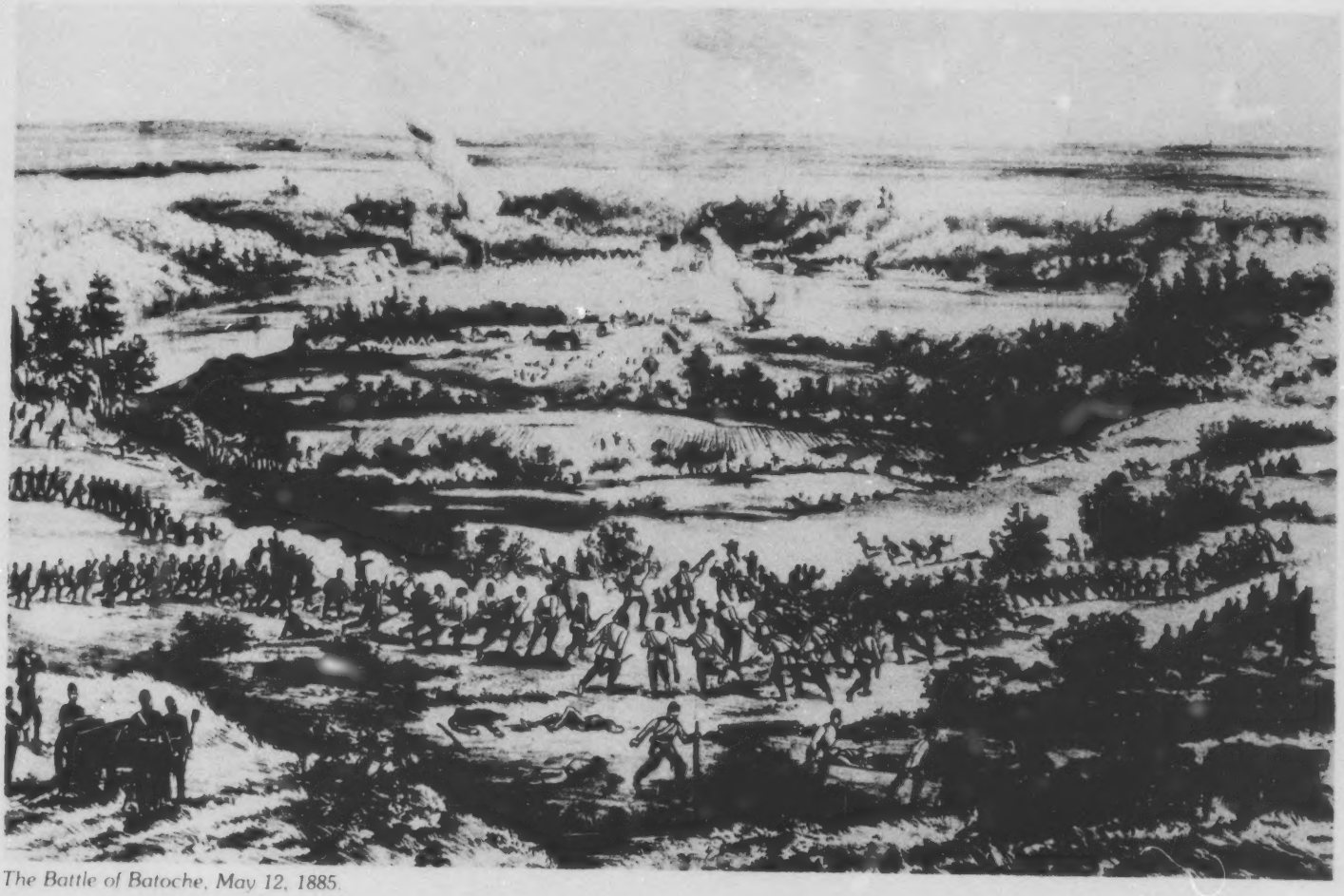
During the first few days of fighting, Middleton kept his inexperienced troops back both to protect them and to force the Metis to waste their ammunition. By May 12 the troops under Lieutenant-Colonel Williams had become quite frustrated by this cautious approach. Among themselves, they agreed to charge the Metis positions at the next opportunity. When they succeeded, Middleton ordered all of his forces to advance and soon occupied Batoche. The attack was popular with both the troops and the public, and Middleton had to ignore the fact that his orders had been disobeyed. He also had to share with Williams the credit for capturing Batoche.

SURRENDER OF THE REBELS

Three days later, Louis Riel surrendered and was taken to Middleton's tent. Middleton talked with him for a couple of days before sending him to Regina for trial. He later recorded his impressions of Riel:

> I found him a mild spoken and mild looking man, with a short, brown beard and an uneasy, frightened look about his eyes, which disappeared as I talked to him . . . After conversing with Riel a good deal for two days, I came to the conclusion that he was sane enough in general everyday subjects, but he was imbued with a strong, morbid religious feeling mingled with intense personal vanity.

Middleton next turned his attention to capturing Chiefs Poundmaker and Big Bear. On May 23, while travelling between Prince Albert and Battleford, he received a message from Poundmaker offering to surrender. He sent the chief a short reply demanding that he surrender



The Battle of Batoche, May 12, 1885.

unconditionally at Battleford on May 26. Poundmaker did so and made a dignified speech. In it he stated that he had tried to keep his men out of the rebellion. Middleton had no sympathy for the problems the Indians were facing. He refused to shake Poundmaker's hand and claimed that the Indians, hearing of Riel's defeat, now came "with lies in their mouths, begging for peace."

Middleton then proceeded to Fort Pitt to pursue Big Bear. He followed Big Bear's trail north as far as Loon Lake before the boggy ground forced his men to turn back. When all of the Indians' white prisoners had escaped or were released, Middleton called off the search. On July 2 Big Bear surrendered to the police at Fort Carlton.

General Middleton listens to an interpreter for his Metis and Indian prisoners.

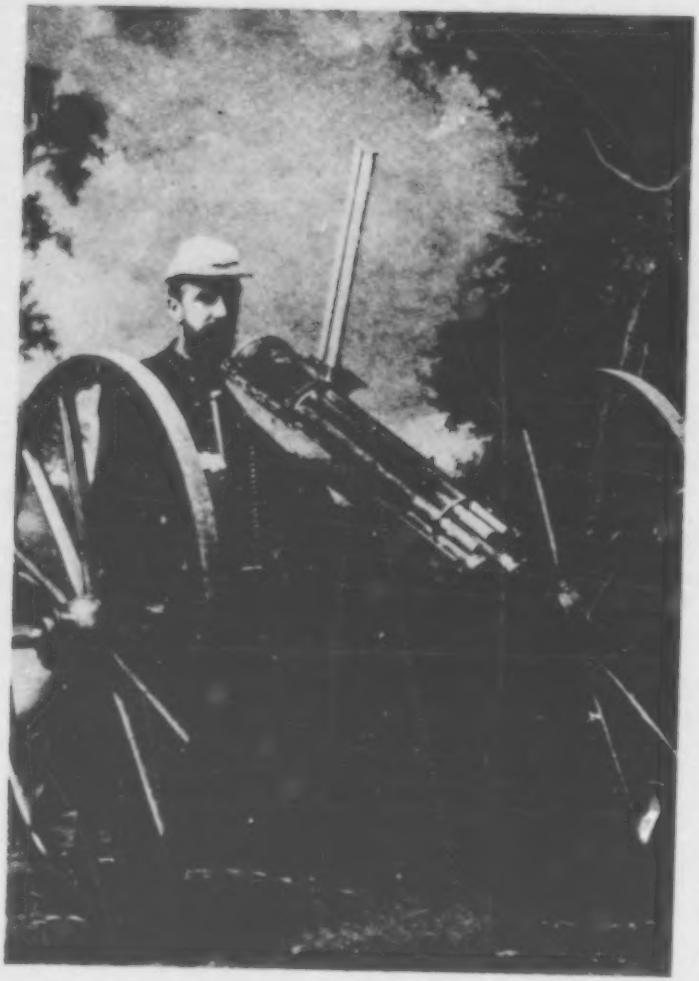
AWARDS AND CRITICISMS

Middleton was awarded $20 000 by the Canadian government for his services during the rebellion, and was knighted by the British. He also came in for a fair share of criticism. His advance on Batoche had been very slow, and even when he got there he held his troops back for four days despite his great advantage in men and arms. Middleton may have been too cautious at times but he was by no means a coward. He was not the type to give orders from a safe distance behind the line, and joined in the action himself. As one of his men reported: "He showed a splendid example to all of us riding about as cool and collected as if he was on parade."

Middleton was also criticized for his attitude toward the North West Mounted Police. The police knew both the country and the Metis method of fighting, but Middleton failed to fully involve them in his campaign. This led to a serious decline in their influence in the North West. Middleton showed the same lack of confidence in his Canadian officers and men, and this attitude did not make him popular with them. Despite his personal courage and ability he remains one of the most controversial military leaders in Canadian history.

Captain Arthur L. Howard

A soldier of fortune



- Was born about 1850.
- Served in the Union (northern) army during the American Civil War of 1861-65.
- Served in the United States cavalry and in the Connecticut Governor's Horse Guards and National Guard.
- Sold his business as a carriage manufacturer and devoted his time to inventions.
- Went to Ottawa as an agent for a machine gun manufacturer at the outbreak of the Riel Rebellion.
- Played an important role in the Battle of Batoche, May 9-12, 1885.
- Accompanied General Middleton in pursuit of Chief Big Bear, May-June 1885.
- Established a munitions plant in Quebec in 1886 and set up an explosives plant in Ontario in 1892.
- Commenced service as a lieutenant of the machine gun detachment of the Canadian Mounted Rifles in the Boer War in South Africa, February 17, 1900.
- Organized and was placed in command of the fifty-man corps known as the Canadian Scouts, 1900.
- Was killed while leading a mounted force near the Swaziland border, February 17, 1901.

Captain Arthur L. Howard.

THE GATLING GUN

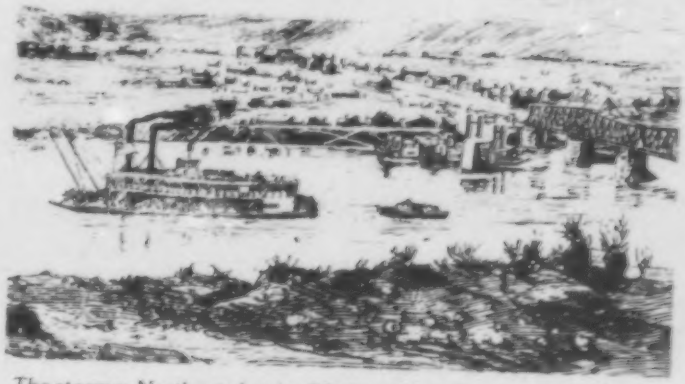
Just before General Middleton left Ottawa for the North West on March 23, 1885, he asked the minister of militia and defence to purchase two machine guns from an American firm. The guns were ordered and were soon on their way to Canada. The Gatling Company also sent along one of their agents, Captain Arthur L. Howard, to give instructions on their use.

The ten-barrelled gun Middleton wanted was named after its American inventor, Dr. R.J. Gatling. It had been in use for thirty-three years and Middleton knew its value as a modern weapon of warfare. It could fire over 1 000 shots per minute and its bullets could penetrate a five-centimetre spruce plank at up to 2 750 metres.

Howard managed to get from Ottawa to Swift Current in ten days and marched from there to Saskatchewan Landing. He left Saskatchewan Landing on board the steamer Northcote with one Gatling gun on April 23. Because of the low water level in the South Saskatchewan River the trip was a slow one, and Howard relieved his boredom by doing some target practice with the gun.

THE BATTLE OF BATOCHE

On May 5 Howard arrived with the gun at Clark's Crossing, near Fish Creek, and early on the morning of May 9 Middleton began his attack on Batoche. Major Charles Boulton's scouts led the way, followed by the infantry, the artillery and the Gatling gun. The artillery began the attack by firing at two barricaded houses about



The steamer Northcote leaving Medicine Hat. This vessel took Captain Howard from Saskatchewan Landing to Clark's Crossing.

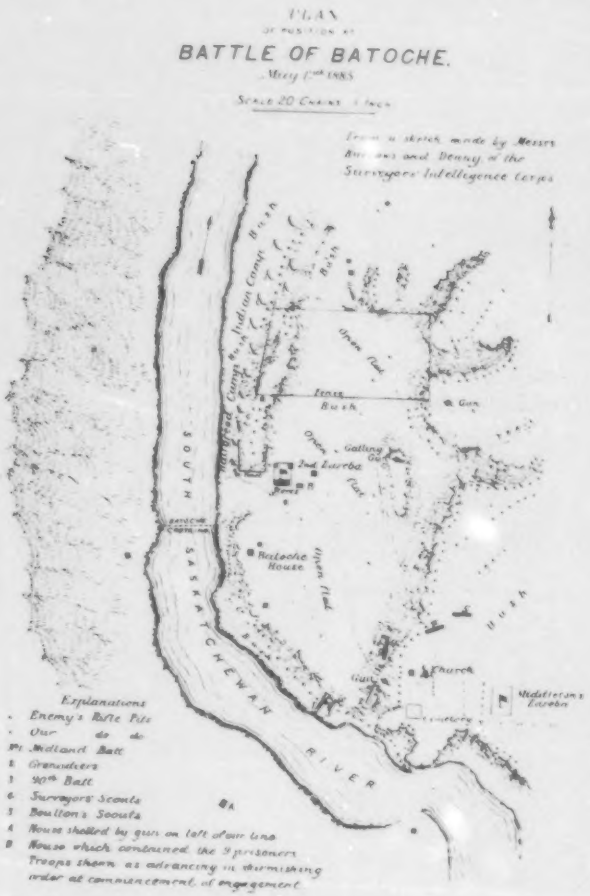
1.5 kilometres from Batoche. Meanwhile, Captain Howard fired several rounds from his gun at the houses and at the rectory of the church of St. Antoine de Padua just south of the village. A few Metis fled from one of the barricaded houses and a white flag quickly appeared at the rectory. Several priests and nuns and a number of Metis women and children emerged. Because they had been forced by Riel to stay at Batoche, they were more than willing to tell Middleton about the state of the rebel defences. The artillery, accompanied by Howard, then moved past the rectory to the edge of a ridge overlooking Batoche and began shelling the village. At this point, according to one witness:

> the rebels suddenly rose from the ravine right in front of us and opened fire. The guns were ordered to the rear, and the Gatling, which Howard had been working so well, rained down a fusillade, but our position was too high, and the bullets flew over the ravine and did no harm. This was a ticklish moment and our men were thrown into some disorder. Howard, however, worked like a Trojan in the thick of it and kept the rebels from charging us. We should have lost many lives, and probably our guns, but for the Gatling.

A French-Canadian gunner was shot through both legs during the action and two of Howard's horses were killed. Although bullets were flying all around him, Howard never flinched. He was a target for concealed marksmen, but he turned the crank of his gun "as coolly as if giving an exhibition." Later in the day one of the gunners was killed and two men were wounded by the rebels occupying a gully to the left of the rectory. Howard moved his gun to the crest of the gully and helped distract the enemy while a group of soldiers retrieved the man's body. He also used his gun to help cover the troops' retreat to a well-fortified zareba, or enclosure, where they were to spend the night. As a result of his efforts on the first day of the battle, Howard earned the nickname "Gat."

On May 10 Howard accompanied a party which sought to reoccupy the previous day's position. He kept up a steady fire for about half an hour but the rebels prevented the group of men from advancing as far as the church.

On May 11 Howard accompanied Middleton and several scouts on a reconnaissance mission on the plain east of Batoche. They found that the rebels' trenches extended in a large semi-circle around Batoche.



Plan of the battlefield at Batoche.

Howard fired his gun into some houses about a kilometre away and scattered the forty or fifty men assembled there. Little else happened that day, but when one officer led a charge on the rifle pits, Howard rushed forward and captured the Metis flag.

On May 12, the final day of the battle, Howard accompanied Middleton to the plain they had occupied the previous day. Middleton hoped to draw the rebels away from their positions and then advance but his plans did not work out. Later in the day, Lieutenant-Colonel Williams and his troops led an unauthorized attack on the rebel position. A surprised Middleton ordered his forces to advance, and the artillery and Gatling gun rushed forward to support them. In a few hours the rebels, outnumbered and desperately short of ammunition, were defeated.

The bayonet charge at Batoche, May 12, 1885.

Howard later accompanied Middleton to Loon Lake and Beaver River in his attempt to capture Chief Big Bear, but Batoche was his last battle of the rebellion.

HOWARD IN THE NEWS

Arthur Howard thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the rebellion. He fought with enthusiasm and flair and won the respect and admiration of the Canadian troops. Major Boulton was impressed by him and felt that Howard "behaved himself throughout the campaign with the greatest coolness and courage, and worthily upheld the character of the great people who are our neighbours." One patriotic officer, whose motto was "Canada First," even went so far as to state: "Everyone must admit that Howard was a hundred times better fitted to command the expedition than any other officer, except Colonel Williams, Herchmer or Steele of the Police." Howard was also well liked as a man, for he "had a droll, yankee way with him which made good company."

Howard and his rapid-firing Gatling gun attracted more than their share of coverage in the newspapers. The gun created quite an impression when it mowed down trees, but it was largely ineffective against the rebels, who hid in their well-prepared trenches. It did prevent the Metis from capturing the other large guns or launching a successful counter-attack, but by and large its importance was blown out of all proportion. Howard's contributions were also overstated. The reporters painted vivid pictures of his exploits and claimed that his actions on the first day of the battle at Batoche had saved the Canadians from

disaster. Both General Middleton and Major Boulton disagreed strongly with these reports. The truth as to Howard's contribution probably lies somewhere between the claims of the newspaper reporters and the comments of Middleton and Boulton.

Howard's obvious enjoyment of the fighting also drew a lot of attention. One of the men who fought at Batoche has left a choice description of Howard on the last day of the battle: "... out of the enclosure, at full speed, come the four horses with the Gatling gun, whilst a dozen yards [11 metres] in front, his dark face beaming with delight and the tassel of his toque streaming behind him, rides the American, Captain Howard, just spoiling for a fight." On this occasion, and on others, the Canadians responded with a cheer.

Because of his love of fighting and machine guns, Howard later volunteered to serve in the second Canadian contingent sent to South Africa during the Boer War of 1899-1902. A reporter for the Toronto *Globe* wrote of him: "The flight of years had not lessened his energy or his delight in the fight, and he displayed a peculiar faculty for getting into hot corners, which, combined with his utter disregard of formalities and his fearless directness of colloquial speech, brought him a good deal of fame."

While most of the men in the Canadian Mounted Rifles returned to Canada in 1900, Howard decided to remain in South Africa. He formed a corps known as the Canadian Scouts from other men who wished to stay on. The corps distinguished itself on several occasions before Howard's daring led to his capture and execution by a group of Boer rebels.

The rations and pay of the Canadian militia during the Rebellion of 1885.

DAILY RATIONS PER MAN

Biscuit or flour	1½ lbs
Cooked meats	1¼ lbs
Or bacon	1¼ lbs
Tea	1 oz
Sugar	2 oz
Salt	¾ oz
Pepper	1/32 oz
Beans	¼ lb
Tobacco	

The following are the rates of pay and allowance of officers when on active service, and when rations and lodging are not provided at the Government's expense:

Rank	*Pay*	*Allowance*
Lieutenant-colonel in command of battalion	$4.87	$1.00
Major	3.90	1.00
Paymaster	3.05	90
Adjutant, with rank of captain	2.82	90
Adjutant with rank of lieutenant	2.44	90
Quartermaster	2.82	76
Surgeon	3.65	1.00
Assistant surgeon	2.13	72
Veterinary surgeon	2.50	76
Captain	2.82	76
Lieutenant	1.58	72
2nd Lieutenant	1.28	69

NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND MEN

Sergeant-major	$1.00
Quartermaster-sergeant	80
Paymaster's clerk	90
Orderly room clerk	90
Hospital sergeant	90
Pay sergeant	80
Sergeant	75
Corporal	60
Bugler	50
Private	50

Madeleine Dumont

A Metis woman

- Was born in Pembina, Dakota, 1840.
- Married Gabriel Dumont at St. Joseph, Dakota, 1858.
- Settled at Petite Ville on the South Saskatchewan River, 1868.
- Husband ran a ferry service at Gabriel's Crossing on the South Saskatchewan River, 1872-84.
- Husband left for St. Peter's, Montana, to ask Louis Riel to return to Canada, May 19, 1884.
- Hosted Louis Riel and his wife and two children on their way to Batoche, July 1, 1885.
- Tended the rebel wounded following the battles at Fish Creek and Batoche, April-May 1885.
- Went to stay at the home of her husband's father, Isidore Dumont, north of Batoche, May 14, 1885.
- Urged her husband to flee to the United States and joined him at Lewiston, Montana, in the summer of 1885.
- Died, May or June 1886.

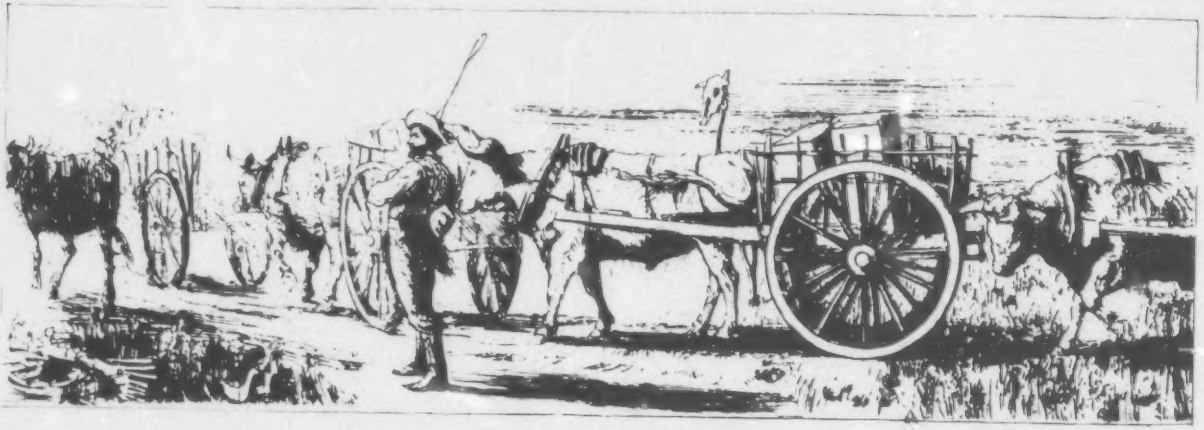
An unidentified Metis woman.

THE BUFFALO HUNT

Like the man she would later marry, Madeleine Wilkie was the child of a leading Metis buffalo hunter. Her father, Jean-Baptiste Wilkie, was president of the great hunt that left Pembina, Dakota, in 1840, the year of her birth. This expedition involved 1 630 men, women and children, 1 210 Red River carts drawn by horses or oxen, 400 of the best horses for use as buffalo runners, and more than 500 dogs. Ten men were elected as captains and the president was chosen from among them. Gabriel Dumont's father was one of the chief hunters on this and other trips led by Wilkie; Gabriel, who was then three years old, may have seen his future wife for the first time during the hunt.

In 1858 Madeleine married Gabriel at St. Joseph, Dakota. Five years later her husband was elected leader of the 200 hunters who spent the winters in the Saskatchewan valley near Fort Carlton. He was to remain their leader until 1884.

During the buffalo hunt, Madeleine Dumont and the other Metis women were responsible for cleaning the hides, drying the meat and preparing pemmican. The hides and surplus pemmican were traded with the Hudson's Bay Company. Madeleine spoke English and her husband did not; on several occasions she travelled all the way from Batoche to Winnipeg to sell his furs for him. When the furs were sold, Madeleine was able to buy some brightly coloured cloth and sewing materials to make her own dresses and kerchiefs. Her grocery purchases were limited as the Metis were nearly self-sufficient. A few items such as tea, flour and soap were all the Dumonts purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company post at Lower Fort Garry in 1859 and 1860.



Red River carts used by the Metis.

A HARDWORKING AND GENEROUS WOMAN

Madeleine Dumont was a hardworking, quiet woman and few people seem to have noticed her next to her colourful husband. No photograph of her is known to exist, but the only description of her states: "She was a fine, comely woman, and people often wondered what she saw in such a homely chap as Gabriel." Madeleine and Gabriel were devoted to each other. On one occasion an Indian was rude to Madeleine, and Gabriel told him: "We are always together, and what is done to her is as if it were done to me." A Scottish adventurer who lived with the Dumonts for a few months in the early 1870's wrote: "In his own home Gabriel was never quarrelsome, and his wife and adopted daughter . . . never got an unkind word from him, so far as I ever knew or heard."

Madeleine and her husband were very generous to the less fortunate people in their community. During a hunt Dumont would kill buffalo by the score and give them to those who were in need. Only when their carts were filled with meat would he begin to fill his own. Samuel Steele, a member of the North West Mounted Police, stated in his memoirs: "One might travel the plains from one end to the other and talk to the Metis hunters and never hear an unkind word said of Dumont . . . When in trouble," wrote Steele, "the cry of all was for Gabriel."

THE METIS ASK RIEL FOR HELP

When Dumont realized that the days of buffalo hunting were numbered, he encouraged his people to settle along the South Saskatchewan River and take up farming. In 1873 he built a log house at Gabriel's Crossing, where he operated a ferry across the river, and broke some land to grow potatoes and barley.

Madeleine and Gabriel Dumont were reasonably well off. Gabriel did well during the buffalo hunt, and worked hard trapping, fishing, trading, guiding, farming, running his ferry, acting as a road contractor and operating a store. His store-saloon was famous for a billiard table that

Madeleine Dumont's husband Gabriel.

he had freighted from Fort Garry. By 1884 the Dumonts were living in a fairly large log cabin at Gabriel's Crossing, and Madeleine had one of the district's first foot-powered washing machines.

The Metis had many grievances, though, among them the trouble they faced in gaining title to the land they farmed. Dumont spoke to the government representative on their behalf and sent a number of petitions to Ottawa. In the summer of 1884 he was one of the delegates sent to ask Louis Riel to return to Canada.

DURING THE REBELLION

Madeleine Dumont remained in the background while her husband was involved in these affairs. Nonetheless, she was soon drawn into the struggle that resulted and helped nurse the wounded rebels. Riel at first had the

Gabriel Dumont preparing his men for battle.

A Metis rifle pit at Batoche.

English prisoners look after the men wounded at Fish Creek but they did not do a proper job and the task was turned over to Madeleine and Madame Batoche. The work must have been difficult for them as they lacked the medical supplies and staff available to the Canadian troops.

During the battle at Fish Creek Riel gathered the men, women and children at Batoche around him to pray for a Metis victory. For hours he prayed, with the people helping to hold his arms up in the form of a cross, and many felt that the Metis success was due to his efforts. During the Battle of Batoche he walked about in front of the lines, armed only with a cross, encouraging his people. He also led the women in prayers. Madeleine Dumont was a religious woman who helped the missionaries teach the Metis children at Batoche. She knew that Riel was taking the place of the priests who had refused to support the rebels. She also knew that he was praying for as bloodless a solution to the rebellion as possible and that he had trouble keeping her more militant husband in check.

During the fighting at Batoche the women and children hid in depressions dug in the river bank. This was necessary as General Middleton's gunners, unable to hit the Metis fighters in their rifle pits, concentrated their fire on the buildings at Batoche and on targets on the other side of the river.

AFTER THE METIS DEFEAT

Following the defeat of the rebels on May 12, Madeleine Dumont escaped into the woods to the north of Batoche. Her husband wanted to continue to fight a guerrilla campaign against the Canadian forces, but his father advised him to abandon his plan and escape to the United States. Madeleine also urged him to leave as soon as possible.

Although troops were searching the area for him, Dumont refused to leave until he had helped the homeless women and children by gathering blankets and food and gathering up some horses. He was especially careful to help Riel's wife Marguerite and her two children, as she was expecting a third child and was in poor health. He even took time to made cowhide moccasins for some children who were walking around barefoot in the cold, wet weather. When he had to leave Madeleine during his search for supplies, he told her: "If the enemy captures you and blames you for my actions, you tell them that since the government couldn't manage me, it wasn't easy for you to do so."

A number of the Metis decided to surrender to General Middleton. Dumont's brother-in-law Moïse Ouellette, who had eleven children to think of, was one of them. When Ouellette urged Dumont to surrender as well, Dumont told him: "Go to the devil! . . . The government has sheared you like sheep, and now it has disarmed you, you are marching to its tune." On May 15 Ouellette told Dumont that Riel himself had surrendered, and Dumont decided to head the next day for the United States. That night he sent a nephew to tell Madeleine of his departure and to ask for some food. Madeleine, who was then staying at his father's house, made him six buckwheat cakes and sent them back with the nephew

IN THE UNITED STATES

Dumont crossed the border and stayed for a while with his brother-in-law near Lewiston, Montana. Madeleine later rode south with some neutral half-breeds and brought news of his father's death, which had likely been hastened by the hardships he had faced.

Several times in 1885 and 1886 Dumont was offered a job in Buffalo Bill Cody's "Wild West Show." He refused the first offer because he was making plans to rescue Louis Riel. (These plans were never carried out.) His main reason for refusing later offers was Madeleine's poor health. Like Louis Riel's wife Marguerite she likely suffered from tuberculosis, and in the spring of 1886 she was thrown from a buggy. Marguerite Riel died in May 1886 and Madeleine died a few weeks later. It was not until after her death that Dumont accepted Colonel Cody's offer of work in his show. There he hoped to publicize the grievances of the Metis people.

IDEAS FOR PROJECTS

1. Prepare a mockup of a 10 to 20 frame filmstrip on the battle at either Fish Creek or Batoche. Submit drawings, photographs or slides of the illustrations you wish to use. Include a short explanation about each. If you prepare slides, you might wish to show them to the class.
2. Prepare a poem or a ballad about one of the people or events in this chapter.
3. Write a short play about the fall of Batoche. Include scenes at Middleton's and Riel's headquarters, a scene among the impatient Canadian troops on the morning of May 12, a scene among the disheartened Metis who are running out of ammunition on the same morning, and the final meeting between Riel and Dumont following their defeat.
4. Contradictory reports have reached Sir John A. Macdonald concerning General Middleton. Some say that Middleton played a crucial role in the Canadian victory in the North West. Others say that he was a bungling "Colonel Blimp." Macdonald is under pressure from Middleton's supporters to present him with a large sum of money on his return from the North West. Macdonald has appointed you to discover the truth about Middleton. Submit a report on your findings.
5. Use the following quotations as inspiration for reports, class discussions or political cartoons:

"He [Dumont] advocated that they attack the Canadian army as coyotes would attack a herd of buffalos — on its flanks, at its heels, relentlessly, but never in a frontal engagement."

E.B. Osler

"They [the Metis] never attacked a convoy . . . they never harassed us on the march . . . it would seem as if they intended only to defend their homes against invasion. At Fish Creek they met us on their frontier, at Batoche they fought us on their own doorstep."

Viscount Melgund

"We knew that . . . we had passed through the most important engagement [Batoche] that had occurred in Canada since the capture of Quebec."

Daniel M. Gordon

"We know all about Gettysburg and nothing about Batoche, which was *the* turning point in Canadian history."

Rudy Wiebe

"In the end Riel found that God was on the side of the big battalions."

Ramsay Cook

"The North-west Rebellion was the first occasion in which Canada had dealt with armed rebellion or agression entirely with her own troops."

George Sterling Ryerson

"Gabriel Dumont's shrewd escape justified the prevailing impression that he was the real brains of the half-breed rebellion."

An American war correspondent

4. Chief Poundmaker vs. Lieutenant-Colonel Otter

After the Battle of Duck Lake, Riel and Dumont sent messengers to Indian bands throughout the North West. They hoped that the Indians would help them in their coming fight with the Canadian militia. To their dismay, few were willing to do so. Out of 26 000 Indians in the North West, only about 1 000 became involved, and few fought beside the Metis at Batoche.

Chief Poundmaker's band of Plains Cree were among the first to be drawn into the rebellion. Poundmaker himself did not want to fight, and the fact that his band did so in the end was more by accident than by design. When he led his people to Battleford to get food, the people of the town fled their homes in alarm and went to the fort. Some of the Indians looted the abandoned buildings, and troops under Colonel Otter were sent to relieve the "siege." Otter led a force to the reserve to punish the Indians, and the Battle of Cut Knife Hill resulted. After the battle some of the victorious Indians forced the others gathered at Poundmaker's reserve to march toward Batoche. They met a wagon train heading for Battleford with supplies and captured it and a number of drivers. When they heard of the defeat of the Metis at Batoche their enthusiasm vanished. They then followed the advice of Poundmaker and surrendered to General Middleton at Battleford.

In this chapter you will meet:

CHIEF POUNDMAKER

Chief Poundmaker was by nature a peace-loving man. He was drawn into the rebellion against his will and won a victory over Colonel Otter at Cut Knife Hill. When the Metis were defeated at Batoche he surrendered to General Middleton at Battleford.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL WILLIAM D. OTTER

Otter was sent by Middleton to relieve the "siege" of Battleford. He organized a flying column of troops to attack Chief Poundmaker at Cut Knife Hill and was later criticized for doing so.

EFFIE LAURIE

Effie Laurie was a teenage girl who took refuge in the Mounted Police barracks at Battleford with several hundred other civilians. From the stockade she was able to see the sacking of Battleford.

ROBERT JEFFERSON

Robert Jefferson was a farm instructor on Chief Poundmaker's reserve. When the rebellion broke out he remained with Poundmaker's band instead of fleeing to Battleford. At the warriors' request he wrote the Metis a letter of support, and at Poundmaker's request he wrote General Middleton to ask for the terms of surrender.

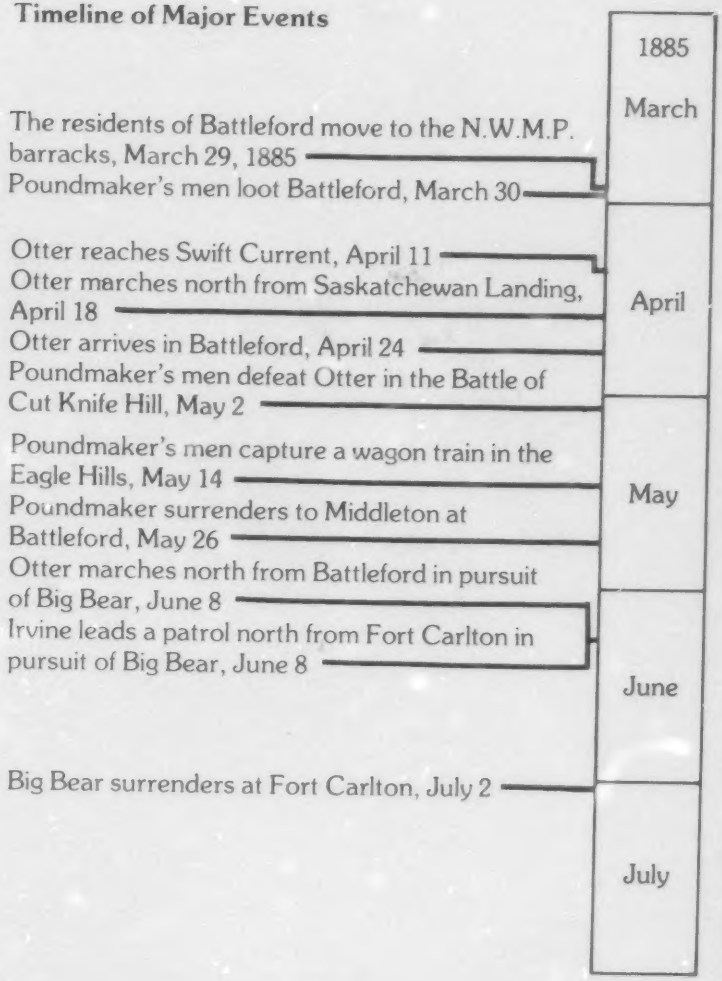
READING WITH A PURPOSE

As you read this chapter do the following:

1. Refer to the chapter timeline and to the map at the end of the book. Be prepared to explain the importance of major events.
2. Try to determine what each person studied in the chapter could say to help:
   (a) establish that Riel incited Chief Poundmaker's band to commit illegal acts, and establish that illegal acts took place
   (b) establish that even though Poundmaker's band committed illegal acts they kept violence to a minimum.

   Refer to the primary source materials found in each biography.
3. After the rebellion Chief Poundmaker was found guilty of treason-felony and sentenced to three years in prison. Try to decide if this was a fair decision and be prepared to support your case in a class discussion.
4. Compare the point of view or attitude toward the rebellion of the following pairs of people: Effie Laurie and Colonel Otter (who were not very familiar with the problems facing the Indians) versus Robert Jefferson and Chief Poundmaker.

Timeline of Major Events


1885
March
April
May
June
July
The residents of Battleford move to the N.W.M.P. barracks, March 29, 1885
Poundmaker's men loot Battleford, March 30
Otter reaches Swift Current, April 11
Otter marches north from Saskatchewan Landing, April 18
Otter arrives in Battleford, April 24
Poundmaker's men defeat Otter in the Battle of Cut Knife Hill, May 2
Poundmaker's men capture a wagon train in the Eagle Hills, May 14
Poundmaker surrenders to Middleton at Battleford, May 26
Otter marches north from Battleford in pursuit of Big Bear, June 8
Irvine leads a patrol north from Fort Carlton in pursuit of Big Bear, June 8
Big Bear surrenders at Fort Carlton, July 2

Chief Poundmaker

A peacemaker

- Was born near Battleford, 1842.
- Was adopted by Chief Crowfoot of the Blackfoot Confederacy, 1873.
- Signed Treaty No. 6 at Fort Carlton, August 23, 1876.
- Selected a reserve at the junction of the Battle River and Cut Knife Creek, autumn 1879.
- Served as a guide and interpreter during Governor-General Lord Lorne's trip from Battleford to Calgary, summer 1881.
- Was unable to stop his people from looting Battleford, March 30-31, 1885.
- Reluctantly signed a letter of support to Riel, April 29, 1885.
- Was attacked by Colonel Otter at Cut Knife Hill, May 2, 1885.
- Captured an unguarded supply train while moving in the direction of Batoche, May 14, 1885.
- Surrendered to General Middleton at Battleford, May 26, 1885.
- Was tried for treason-felony at Regina on August 17 and sentenced to three years in Stony Mountain penitentiary; was released on March 4, 1886.
- Died at Blackfoot Crossing, July 4, 1886.

Pitikwahanapiwiyin (Chief Poundmaker).

A PEACEMAKER

Poundmaker was a leader of the Plains Cree, liked and respected by almost everyone he met. He was well known as a buffalo hunter, and his name recalled his skill in building corrals or pounds on the prairie to trap the stampeding herds.

When the buffalo declined and the white population increased in the North West, Poundmaker realized that his people would have to change their way of life. For one thing, the days of fighting between his tribe and the Blackfoot must come to an end.

A Blackfoot camp in 1883.

Poundmaker himself had been adopted as a grown man by the great Blackfoot Chief Crowfoot, and he loved the older man deeply. Largely because of this tie he was able to act as a peacemaker between the Blackfoot and Cree, and he patched up many disputes. Poundmaker was ideally suited to this role. Unlike many of his fellows he truly disliked war and believed in the brotherhood of man. One man who knew him well wrote: "He always appeared to me to be more anxious to shine as a statesman than as a warrior."

ATTEMPTS AT FARMING

In the fall of 1879 Poundmaker and his band chose a reserve on the Battle River dominated by Cut Knife Hill. They learned to build log houses, and in the spring of 1880 they broke land and planted crops. The crops did not do very well, and the hunters had little luck finding game. The next spring some members of the band stayed behind to plant the crops while the rest crossed the American border to hunt one of the last buffalo herds there. That summer Poundmaker was asked to act as a guide and interpreter on a trip Governor-General Lord Lorne was to make from Battleford to Calgary. When he returned home in the fall he found that the crops had failed again. In the spring of 1882 a third attempt was made, and in 1883 a fourth.

The Indians were by now thoroughly disheartened. With Poundmaker leading them they had tried very hard to succeed at farming, but the land was poor and the weather either too dry or too wet. Even the moles seemed

to conspire against them.

As early as 1882 Poundmaker had judged the Indians' position:

> Next summer . . . the railway will be close to us, the whites will find the country, and they will dictate to us as they please. It is useless to dream that we can frighten them; that time is past; our only resource is our work, our industry, and our farms.

Now even these resources seemed to be failing them.

ON THE VERGE OF STARVATION

The government had made treaty promises to feed the Indians during the change from buffalo hunting to farming. The rations were poor enough to start with, and they were eventually reduced as an economy move. The once free and independent people were now on the verge of starvation.

Chief Poundmaker (right) watches as one of the last buffalo in Canada is killed in 1881.

The winter of 1883-84 was the second severe winter in a row and Poundmaker's people were in a desperate state. He could not let them suffer any longer. He and Cree Chief Big Bear decided that they must unite the numerous Cree bands living along the North Saskatchewan River; if they could speak with one voice perhaps the government would listen to them.

THE INDIAN COUNCIL

Poundmaker invited the Indians from every reserve in the area to a meeting, and by mid-June of 1884 over 2 000 Indians were camped near his reserve. The government officials and the North West Mounted Police were so alarmed about the gathering that the local Indian agent and the police even told Big Bear not to attend. When he refused to obey they were forced to back down. In retaliation the farm instructors were ordered to stop issuing rations.

As a direct result of this policy an Indian struck one of the farm instructors. Superintendent Crozier of the North West Mounted Police disrupted the Indian gathering to arrest the man. This incident nearly led to a pitched battle between the Indians and the police. Only the careful diplomacy of Big Bear and Poundmaker prevented bloodshed.

Big Bear then organized a second Indian council to be held at Duck Lake in late July and early August. Just about

every Cree band attended to voice their grievances to the government officials there, but the government failed to act on their complaints.

The Metis had also voiced their complaints to the government without result. When they resorted to the use of force Poundmaker was placed in a difficult position. He felt that both the Indians and the Metis would lose in an armed struggle with Ottawa, but he knew that the young Cree warriors did not want to sit on the reserve while the Metis fought the government. There was only one way he might keep his people out of the conflict. That was to go to Battleford and use the Metis uprising to pry more adequate rations from the Indian agent.

The "old town" of Battleford on the south side of the Battle River. The town was looted by members of Poundmaker's band.

THE LOOTING OF BATTLEFORD

When he started for Battleford, Poundmaker was joined by nearly every man in his camp as well as a few women. Unfortunately the white residents in and around Battleford misinterpreted his actions and fled to the police barracks. The Indian agent there was so nervous that he refused to leave the fort and would not issue rations without permission from Indian Commissioner Edgar Dewdney. By the time Dewdney gave his permission it was too late. Poundmaker's men were hungry, frustrated and excited by the news of the Metis victory at Duck Lake. The temptation of the empty buildings was too much for them; if the Indian agent would not give them food, they would take it. Poundmaker lost control of his people and they spent the night looting Battleford. They were joined there by the Stonies of the Eagle Hills, who had just murdered their farm instructor and a white settler.

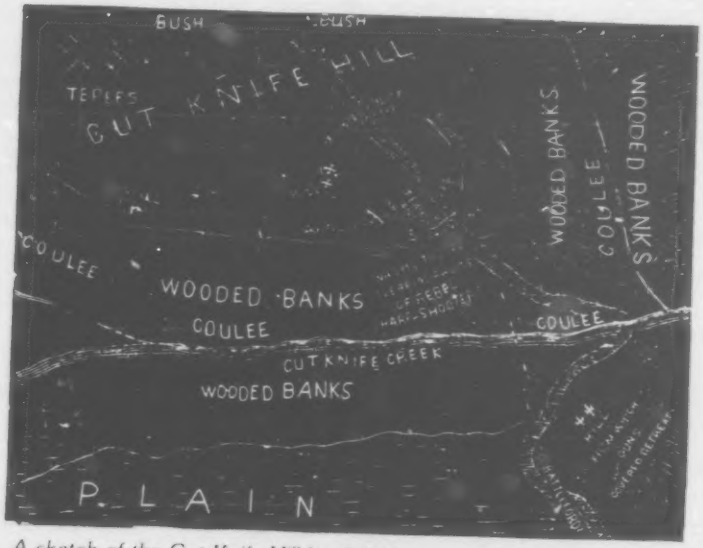
The next morning Poundmaker led his people back to Cut Knife Hill but he never regained complete control of his band. Following their return from Battleford the warriors erected a soldiers' tent, and for the rest of the rebellion they made the decisions. They also roamed the countryside in small groups, looting the abandoned farms.

In early April Poundmaker received a letter from Louis Riel asking for help but he ignored this and other requests. On April 29 his warriors finally sent Riel a letter requesting ammunition and assistance in capturing Battleford. Poundmaker did not agree with the decision but allowed his name to appear at the bottom of the letter.

THE BATTLE OF CUT KNIFE HILL

On May 2 Poundmaker was at last forced to take part in the rebellion. He was awakened that morning by an old man who had spotted the approach of a 325-man force under Colonel Otter. Poundmaker did not have time to make any plans but guided his people into the wooded coulees surrounding Cut Knife Hill.

Otter led his troops to the top of the hill and Poundmaker's warriors were able to pin down his exposed forces for six hours. The Indians used the trick of raising decoys on sticks, and picked off the soldiers as they rose



A sketch of the Cut Knife Hill battlefield.

Poundmaker's men firing at Otter's troops during the Battle of Cut Knife Hill.

to shoot at the targets. They inflicted heavy losses on Otter's men, but when the soldiers retreated Poundmaker refused to let his men pursue them.

Following the battle the warriors and Riel's messengers forced the whole group to move toward Batoche to aid Riel. On the way they came across a train of thirty-one unguarded wagons loaded with supplies for Battleford. The frightened teamsters literally handed over the supplies. Poundmaker managed to prevent his men from killing the twenty-one drivers captured along with the wagons.

A teamster hired to transport supplies during the rebellion.

SURRENDER

Five days later Poundmaker heard of Riel's defeat at Batoche, and the more peaceful members of the band regained control. Poundmaker sent farm instructor Robert Jefferson and a priest in different directions to look for General Middleton and ask for his peace terms. Seven days later he surrendered to Middleton at Battleford. One of the officers who witnessed this event has left us with a vivid description of Poundmaker and his band:

> . . . the appearance of the band is very picturesque and striking. The Great Chief himself is a very remarkable looking man; tall, very handsome and intelligent looking and dignified to a degree. He wears a handsome war-cap made of the head of a cinnamon bear, with a long tuft of feathers floating from it, a leather jacket studded with brass nails and worked with beads, long beaded leggings coming up to his hips and brightly coloured moccasins, while over his shoulders hangs a gaily coloured blanket. The others are dressed in much the same manner and all are elaborately painted.

Everyone who saw Poundmaker always remarked on his proud and dignified appearance and his ability as a speaker. When he led his defeated group into Battleford he managed to maintain his dignity even when confronted by the rude and pompous Middleton. The general insulted Poundmaker by saying that he had not helped Riel because he was afraid "like a squaw." Poundmaker calmly replied: "I am sorry, I feel in my heart that I am such a person as I am."

Poundmaker was later sentenced to three years in prison for his role in the rebellion but was released the following March. He died only four months later on Crowfoot's reserve at Blackfoot Crossing.

Lieutenant-Colonel W. D. Otter

Commander of the Battleford Column

Lieutenant-Colonel William D. Otter.

- Was born near Clinton, Ontario, December 3, 1843.
- Joined the Canadian militia in 1861 as a private in the Victoria Rifles and later served in the Queen's Own Rifles.
- Compiled and published a manual on military tactics, 1881.
- Commanded the Battleford column of the Canadian militia during the Rebellion of 1885.
- Fought Chief Poundmaker at Cut Knife Hill, May 2, 1885.
- Commanded one of the columns sent in pursuit of Chief Big Bear, June 7 - July 1, 1885.
- Commanded the first Canadian contingent in the Boer War in South Africa, 1899-1900.
- Became the first Canadian officer to command the Canadian forces as chief of general staff, March 3, 1908.
- Retired from active service in December 1912, but in October 1914 was appointed supervisor of the internment of enemy aliens during World War I.
- Retired again, September 1920.
- Was given a belated promotion to the rank of general, March 1922.
- Died in Toronto, May 6, 1929.

THE CALL TO ARMS

On March 27, the day after the North West Mounted Police defeat at Duck Lake, Colonel Otter received a telegram ordering him to mobilize 580 men. General Middleton had already warned him that he and his men might be needed in the North West, and he was ready to leave Toronto on March 30.

Otter was the only Canadian chosen by Middleton to serve as a high ranking officer in the campaign. He was a dedicated military man with many years' experience and he made it clear that discipline would be strict. Before his hastily assembled army left Winnipeg for the North West he spoke to them about the evils of drink. A reporter who attended the meeting noted:

> Perhaps some of them had provided themselves with liquor. If they had, he charged them to throw it away now. They would do their work better without it. It would merely weaken them and unfit them for service, and then they would be left behind as useless.

Otter captured the mood of the soldiers, who responded to his speech "with a great cheer that fairly made the building crack." A few men later wrote home pleading for a few bottles of "medicine" to be smuggled west in food hampers, but most would survive, without complaint, one of the driest military campaigns on record.

Canadians responded to the call to arms with enthusiasm. Patriotic crowds lined the streets to watch the soldiers march to the train station, and excited citizens jammed into the station to cheer them on their way.

Moving cannons along the unfinished section of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

THE TRIP WEST

The men were to need a good deal of enthusiasm to get them through the days ahead. There were still over 142 kilometres of track unfinished on the Canadian Pacific Railway north of Lake Superior, and the men had to traverse the four gaps in the track by sleigh or on foot. As the men were issued only one blanket each they no doubt appreciated the gifts of underwear, toques, mufflers and

boots given them by the city of Toronto before they left. Otter and his men were exposed to temperatures as low as -32°C, high winds, snow and sleet storms, blinding sunlight and poor or non-existent shelter and food arrangements. Sometimes they sang hymns to take their minds off their hardships. Referring to one morning on this part of the trip, one man wrote: "There was probably more heroism in facing cheerfully the scene of disillusionment that confronted the men than during the heat of battle." Another, who took a group of cavalry over the same route, felt that compared with Napoleon's crossing of the Alps, their own trip was much the worse.

Otter and his men arrived in Winnipeg on April 7 and then proceeded to Qu'Appelle. On the way the train stopped at Brandon, where the cars were "invaded by the sprightly damsels of the hamlet armed with steaming jugs of coffee and bags of tempting cakes." The men were impressed by both the delicacies and the welcome they were given.

After a few days at Qu'Appelle Otter received orders to proceed to Swift Current and march from there to the South Saskatchewan River. Steamers would then take him and his men to Clark's Crossing. General Middleton planned to march from Clark's Crossing to Batoche with his column on the east side of the river and Otter's on the west.

A CHANGE OF PLANS

Middleton's plans for a knockout blow at the heart of the rebellion were upset by news of the murder of nine people

Colonel Otter's brigade approaching the South Saskatchewan River.

at Frog Lake. The citizens of Battleford also feared an Indian attack and had sought refuge in the North West Mounted Police barracks there. When some of Chief Poundmaker's men began pillaging their abandoned homes they begged that a force be sent to their rescue. Public and political pressure forced Middleton to change his plans. On April 11 he ordered Otter to go to Battleford as quickly as he could.

Unfortunately the water level in the South Saskatchewan River was low, and the steamers Otter needed to transport his men to Clark's Crossing did not arrive. Middleton then ordered him to go by land. Otter ferried his force of 543 troops across the river on the one available steamer, the Northcote. With them were 200 teamsters driving wagons loaded with 25 days' worth of

rations, as well as oats and hay. The group then began a 305 kilometre march to Battleford. One man reported: "Our column on the march was like a great two-mile [three-kilometre] serpent winding its way along; coiled to rest at dark and uncoiled again at dawn."

Although they did not encounter any resistance on the way, the men did endure much hardship because of the cold, wet weather. They had not brought any firewood along and they had to go several days with nothing but bully beef, hardtack, dried apples, oatmeal and cold water to eat and drink. Spurred on by news of the fall of Fort Pitt, the group managed to average almost fifty kilometres a day and reached Battleford on April 24.

Canadian troops entering Battleford, April 24, 1885.

THE RELIEF OF BATTLEFORD

Otter's march to Battleford was avidly reported by the eastern press. Stories were told of the several hundred innocent women and children huddled within the walls of the fort, and the Indian menace was greatly exaggerated. Everyone was relieved when the crusade-like expedition reached the village. The citizens of Battleford and the rest of Canada were delighted with the outcome of the mission. It was the first success of the Canadian forces in the campaign, and it helped cushion the blow of Middleton's heavy losses at Fish Creek later the same day.

The citizens of Battleford were inspired by the presence of Otter's men and angered by the burning of their homes. They immediately put pressure on Otter to punish the Indians. Once his men had rested, he was more than willing to do so.

THE BATTLE OF CUT KNIFE HILL

Otter decided to launch a daybreak attack on Poundmaker's camp. He left Battleford at 3 p.m. on May 1 with a flying column of 325 men, two seven-pounder guns, one Gatling machine gun and forty-eight wagons. At 7:30 p.m. they stopped for supper and a rest, and when the moon rose at 11 p.m. they continued their march. The force arrived at Cut Knife Hill just after dawn on May 2.

Otter had expected to make a surprise attack on a sleeping village, but his men were spotted and were soon involved in gunfire with the Indians. The battle did not go well. The Indians knew every inch of the ground and had

The Battle of Cut Knife Hill, May 2, 1885.

the advantage of cover, while the soldiers were exposed on top of a treeless hill. In the six-hour battle that raged, Otter was kept busy trying to prevent the Indians from completely surrounding his forces. His men were also having trouble with the guns and were running low on ammunition.

With another "Custer's last stand"* staring him in the face, Otter ordered a retreat. He had his men clear the route down the hill and had one cannon taken to the other side of Cut Knife Creek to cover the retreat. His men took with them fourteen wounded and seven of the eight dead, and arrived back at Battleford at 10 p.m.

OTTER CRITICIZED

Otter had made a mistake in attacking Cut Knife Hill. He had not received clear orders from Middleton to do so, and he should not have let himself be talked into it. Once there he set an example of courage and coolness under fire, and he organized a model retreat. Some of his men complained that he was too strict a commander, but it was discipline that helped keep his losses to a minimum during this vulnerable retreat.

On May 12 Middleton captured Batoche without Otter's help and on May 24 he arrived at Battleford. Otter was reprimanded for his ill-conceived attack on May 2 and was left behind while Middleton pursued Chief Big Bear.

*George Custer was an American army officer. He and his men were killed in a battle with the Sioux and Cheyenne at Little Big Horn in Montana in 1876.

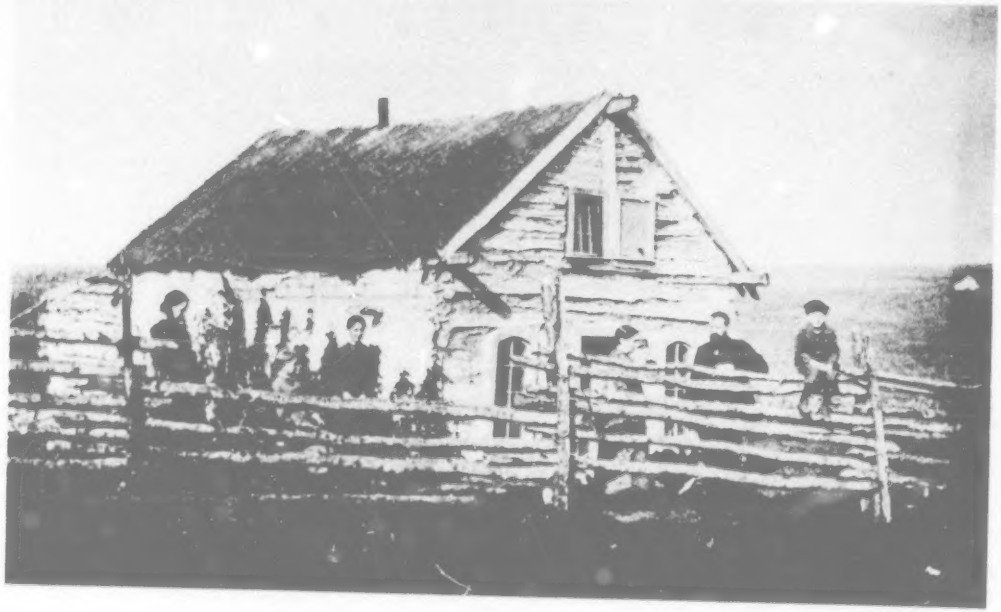
On June 7 Otter and his men were given a chance to redeem themselves. They were sent north by Middleton to help prevent Big Bear's retreat to the east. Although the muskeg and creeks made their task almost impossible, Otter's men pushed on until they reached Turtle Lake. Scouting parties were sent out but failed to find the elusive chief. Middleton cancelled the futile search, and Otter returned to Battleford just in time to hear that Big Bear had surrendered at Fort Carlton.

A HERO'S WELCOME

For the militia the campaign was over and they were soon sent home, but Otter remained in charge of a force at Battleford until October. When Otter and his men arrived in Toronto on October 26 they were met by a large and enthusiastic crowd. They were honoured with a banquet, and Otter was presented with a purse of money by the citizens of Toronto. When the British officers criticized Otter's nearly disastrous attack on Poundmaker at Cut Knife Hill, the press and people of Toronto rushed to his defence. The deputy minister of militia reflected public opinion when he stated: "Cut Knife in my estimation is worth ten Batoches, and it illustrates the fact that Canadians can fight their own battles without any foreign help."

Effie Laurie

A future journalist



Effie Laurie (far left) with her family.

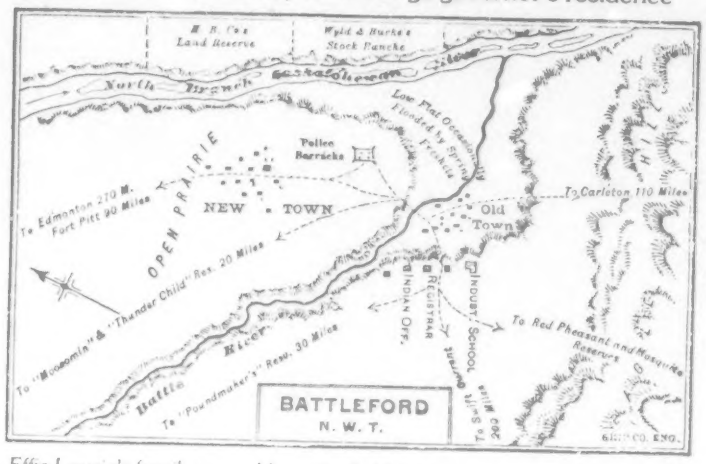
- Was born in Windsor, Ontario, 1867.
- Moved with her family to Winnipeg, 1871.
- Moved with her family to Battleford, April 1882.
- Observed an eclipse of the sun and the excitement it caused among the half-breeds, March 16, 1885.
- Moved into the stockade at Battleford, March 29, 1885.
- Saw the Indians burn and loot many of the buildings in Battleford, March 30 - April 23, 1885.
- Witnessed the arrival at Battleford of Inspector Francis Dickens and his twenty-two man force from Fort Pitt, April 22, 1885.
- Witnessed the arrival of Colonel Otter and his men, April 24, 1885.
- Witnessed the arrival of General Middleton on May 24 and the surrender of Chief Poundmaker on May 26, 1885.
- Married Sergeant John Henry Storer, 1889.
- Husband killed in France during World War I.
- Worked on the Regina *Leader-Post* and the Moose Jaw *Times-Herald*.
- Died in Saskatoon, May 19, 1951.

BATTLEFORD

Effie's father, Patrick Laurie, moved to Battleford in 1878 to found a newspaper in the new capital of the North West Territories. The paper, the *Saskatchewar Herald*, was the first one between Winnipeg and the Rockies, and by the late fall of 1881 it was well established.

Laurie had by this time built a home for his wife and six children and he returned to Winnipeg to get them. On his return to Battleford in April he took three of the children, including Effie, with him. In June Mrs. Laurie followed with the others.

Effie found Battleford very small after growing up in Winnipeg, but her father had faith in the town's future. The government had already built a large governor's residence and homes for other officials. A strong North West Mounted Police post had also been built across the Battle River on a high plateau. The new railway was expected to pass through the village, and many merchants and farmers were moving into the area.



Effie Laurie's family moved from the "old town" to the police barracks on March 29, 1885.

In 1881 the government decided to build the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway south of Battleford, and in 1883 the capital was moved to Regina. This decreased the number of new settlers in the area. In spite of this, the North West Mounted Police barracks remained at Battleford. This was explained by the central location of Battleford and its closeness to several Indian reserves. Within fifty kilometres there were 1 400 Indians on ten reservations. Indian unrest in the area in 1884 led to the expansion of the police force, and the government payroll alone was large enough to prevent most of the businessmen in the town from leaving.

THE SOLAR ECLIPSE

At 10:30 a.m. on March 16, 1885, Effie witnessed an eclipse of the sun: "It was an awesome thing to those not knowing the cause, for a peculiar darkness settled down at noonday, continuing for the greater part of an hour, and giving things a strange greenish-yellow hue." She noticed that the eclipse caused a great deal of excitement among the Indians and half-breeds. A half-breed woman who was helping wash some blankets suddenly rushed to Mrs. Laurie to tell her that the sun was broken; without another word she left her work and hurried home with the lather of soapsuds still on her arms.

Effie and her mother did not know the reason for the woman's excitement, but they did notice that after that event the normally polite half-breeds and Indians suddenly became less friendly. They later learned that Louis Riel had told a group of Metis near Batoche that if the sun were broken on the morning of March 16 it would be a sign from God to strike the blow for their rights. He also said that when the trouble subsided the buffalo would come back. Riel had, of course, known that the eclipse was about to take place.

TO THE BARRACKS

The change in the attitude of the half-breeds and the Indians was enough to worry Effie's mother. Mrs. Laurie consulted a neighbour, Peter Ballendine, who was a trusted friend of the Indians. He told her that there was danger of an uprising and that he would give them enough warning to get to the Mounted Police barracks if anything happened. "At five o'clock on March 29th," Effie later recorded, "mother was standing at the front gate, when Mr. Ballendine walked down the hill and without lifting his eyes he said 'Mrs. Laurie, go to the barracks, the Indians are camped only three miles [five kilometres] out.'"

Effie and her family crossed the shallow Battle River two at a time on a buckboard. The river was thawing and the icy water, which was nearly one metre deep, flooded the floor of the carriage. Once the family was safely across the river they walked over a kilometre to the barracks. In their haste to leave Battleford for the stockade, each member of the family was able to save only one bundle of possessions.

The next day Effie saw the younger Indians looting the homes and businesses of Battleford. In the next few weeks she was to watch them burn many of the buildings and damage her own family's home. She heard the drumming and singing of the Indians and listened to them playing her precious piano, brought all the way from Winnipeg in 1882. Luckily the Indians had been so impressed by her musical skills that they did not destroy the piano. Effie also saw Judge Rouleau's house burn and the Hudson's Bay Company store burn and blow up with a terrific noise.

Chief Poundmaker's men pillaging the "old town" of Battleford.

An account of the destruction at Battleford which appeared in the Winnipeg Daily Sun.

BATTLEFORD IN RUINS.

Appearance of the town on the arrival of the troops.

BATTLEFORD, N.W.T., April 25. — Without a single exception, every house situated in the old town, lying south of the Battle river, as well as the dwellings of the settlers further down the valley, have been wrecked by the warriors of Poundmaker and his dusky allies. The following is a list of the depredations committed here since the gates of the fort closed upon the terrified fugitives, just one month ago:

[A list of looted and damaged buildings follows.]

On every side the traces of destruction are visible. On a summit overlooking the Battle River stands a blackened chimney, which is all remains of the fine residence of Judge Rouleau. The Indians, not satisfied with carrying off everything of value that the house contained, smashed the costly furniture. The road for acres around is strewn with broken chairs and glassware and expensive articles of bric-a-brac. The impression here prevails that the place was fired as a signal to the Indians in the distance that aid was approaching the beleaguered garrison. Others claim that this atrocious act of vandalism was committed by several warriors who bear the most bitter enmity towards the judge for having sentenced relatives to long terms in the Stony Mountain prison. The house, together with its contents, was valued at $75,000.

At the sites of the stores the destructiveness displayed was again visible. Smoking ruins only remained to indicate where flourishing and honest business was formerly done. The narrow street which runs along the edge of a wooded ravine on arrival of the expeditionary force was covered with articles of every description.

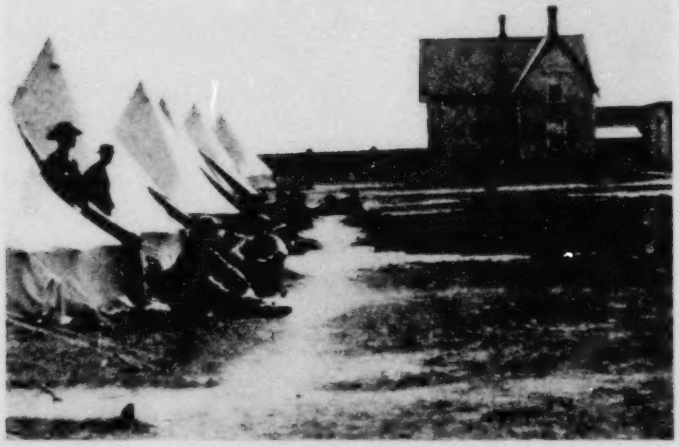
IN THE STOCKADE

Effie and her brothers and sisters were crowded into a barracks room along with almost thirty other women and children. The room was very long, and when a fire was built in the stove at one end the people at the other end were still very cold. Other people ended up in the commander's residence, the officers' quarters and the harness shop. When all the buildings were full a large tent was pitched for the overflow. Eventually over 500 people were accommodated.

The buildings were surrounded by a stockade of three-metre high poles that enclosed an area approximately 150 metres square. During Effie's stay at the fort the men improved the stockade by nailing boards along the top of the palisade, piling earth up on the inside, making loopholes in the stockade wall, and erecting bastions at two corners. Supplies taken from a warehouse were placed in a large circle around the flag pole in the centre of the stockade in case the Indians broke past the outer walls. In addition to these measures, sentries were placed inside and outside the stockade, a picket walked back and forth outside, and a mounted patrol ranged for several kilometres around.

The inhabitants of Battleford were frightened as very little of the news that reached them was reassuring. They heard of the defeat of the North West Mounted Police at Duck Lake, the burning of Fort Carlton, the murder of nine people at Frog Lake, the surrender of Fort Pitt to Chief Big Bear, and the taking of hostages by Big Bear's men at Frog Lake and Fort Pitt. Effie heard one woman

settler tell how the Indians had stolen her family's horses and wagon and threatened to kill her husband. Another settler had been killed while greasing his wagon, and a farm instructor had been killed on a Stoney reserve. Unfortunately Inspector W. S. Morris had only a small police force with which to protect the people. Even with the help of forty-five volunteers and 134 armed civilians he was unwilling to march out of the fort and leave the women and children inadequately protected.



Parade square inside the stockade at Fort Battleford.

COLONEL OTTER ARRIVES

On April 24 Effie shared the wild joy of the people when Colonel Otter and his troops arrived on their relief mission. On May 1 she saw them leave to attack Poundmaker at Cut Knife Hill and on May 3 she saw them return in defeat. On May 4 she attended the impressive military funeral for seven of the men killed in the battle. In her memoirs she recorded the scene this way:

> At sunset . . . the funeral cortege moved away. The caskets, draped in the Union Jack, rested on gun-carriages, while the regimental band of the North West Mounted Police played 'Nearer My God to Thee' as a funeral march . . . the heroes were laid to rest on the bank over-looking the Saskatchewan River.

The scene was particularly moving for Effie and the other inhabitants of the fort as the popular bugler "Paddy" Burke was one of the men buried. He was survived by his wife and six children.

Fortunately for Effie, none of her family were killed during the rebellion. Her father served with the Home Guards at Battleford; her brother Dick was with the 90th Winnipeg Battalion; her brother Will, a war correspondent for her father's paper, went to Fort Carlton and fought at Duck Lake; and the rest of her family lived in the barracks at Battleford. However, the family home was looted and badly damaged by the Indians.

After the defeat and surrender of Riel, and the surrender of Poundmaker and his people at Battleford on May 26, Effie and her family had to continue living in the barracks for another month before her father could make

their house habitable. While still living at the barracks, Effie met Theresa Delaney and Theresa Gowanlock. Both women had lost their husbands at Frog Lake and had spent over two months in captivity with Big Bear's band. After hearing their stories of hardship it is doubtful that Effie complained too much about her family's problems.

ROMANCE AND MARRIAGE

During her stay in the stockade, Effie did not fail to notice the handsome young members of the North West Mounted Police who were also living there. Like her sister Jessie, she likely met her future husband during an evening walk around the grounds. Effie noted in her memoirs that "one young lady developed the habit of entertaining her admirer after the usual hour of departure." As this inconvenienced the other women who wanted to prepare for bed, one of them put on her red flannel gown and emerged from behind a box to smilingly say good night. It did not take long for the young man to take the hint and leave. Effie does not say who the girl was but perhaps it was Effie herself.

Effie's future husband, John Storer, was quite active during the siege. On April 2 he left on horseback with another officer to carry dispatches the 320 kilometres to Swift Current. He returned on April 13 with newspapers that reported the concern of the people in eastern Canada. They felt that a military force should be sent to relieve the inhabitants of Battleford. Storer was promoted to sergeant after the rebellion in recognition of this journey.

AFTER THE REBELLION

As a member of the Battleford chapter of the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire, Effie remembered the men who lost their lives during the rebellion. She helped improve the North West Mounted Police burial ground by re-lettering and re-setting the crosses which marked the graves. She also saw to it that a wreath was placed there on Armistice and Decoration Days.

Effie had made many friends during her stay in the stockade. She later enjoyed meeting with them to talk of the experiences they had shared. She also wrote articles on the subject for various newspapers. In one article she confided that "amid the grimness there was for us younger ones a sustaining sense of adventure and strangeness which overrode alarm and discomfort."

Robert Jefferson

A farm instructor

- Was born on Tyneside in England, 1858.
- Emigrated to Manitoba, spring 1876.
- Taught school on the Red Pheasant reserve near Battleford, 1878-84, and in 1881 married a young indian woman from the reserve.
- Was appointed farm instructor on Chief Poundmaker's reserve, spring 1884.
- Witnessed a confrontation between 2 000 Cree and a North West Mounted Police force under Superintendent Crozier, June 1884.
- Remained with Poundmaker's band during the rebellion of 1885.
- Delivered a message from Poundmaker to General Middleton asking for terms of peace.
- Delivered Middleton's reply to Poundmaker.
- Witnessed the surrender of Poundmaker to Middleton at Battleford, May 26, 1885.
- Acted as a witness for the prosecution at the trial of Louis Riel, July 29, 1885, and at the trial of Poundmaker, August 17, 1885.
- Wrote his memoirs, *Fifty Years on the Saskatchewan*, 1929.
- Moved to Victoria, British Columbia, in 1930 and died there on June 7, 1934.

Robert Jefferson.

MANITOBA BOUND

In 1876 Robert Jefferson was a young man of eighteen. He came from an old seafaring family and his parents fondly hoped that he would become a civil engineer. To their great dismay, Robert had other plans. A cousin of his had decided to emigrate to Canada and he easily persuaded Jefferson and a friend to go along for the adventure. When Jefferson's father saw that his protests were futile he relented to a degree. He gave his son just enough money to get to Manitoba and stay there long enough to see his mistake.

Jefferson and his companions outfitted themselves with everything they could think of and boarded a ship for Quebec. They planned to travel second class but when they saw their quarters they changed their minds. Saving money was one thing, but the line had to be drawn somewhere.

After a two-week voyage the three reached Quebec and proceeded by train and boat to Winnipeg. On the way they were relieved of more of their money by a cardsharp. Jefferson describes this experience in his memoirs:

> While we waited for the arrival of the boat, a plausible prestidigitator amused his leisure at our expense, for a couple of hours, illustrating the vagaries of the "three card trick." He looked rustic and simple, and handled the cards clumsily, but he knew a great deal more than we did. It cost us something to find that out. Indeed, one of my partners lost all his money and his watch and chain before his confidence waned sufficiently to allow himself to be dragged away from such a seductive opportunity.

When Jefferson finally reached Manitoba he went to stay with a friend but he did not like the life of a settler. The countryside was not what he expected; his friend's diet of fish was monotonous; and there was no sugar for the tea. He was glad to retreat to a boarding house for the summer. When his money was almost gone he joined his cousin on Lake Winnipeg.

Jefferson's cousin had great plans for a log house he hoped to build, but before it was nearly completed winter had come. The two men finished part of the house with a makeshift roof of poles, hay and dirt and built a fireplace of stone and mud. They could use it to cook in, but if they made a fire big enough to warm themselves the pole and mud chimney caught fire. They slept in their overcoats and were very glad when spring arrived.

Jefferson looked for work and found a job teaching school on an Indian reserve near Selkirk. After a year and a half he joined a small group of half-breeds who were going to the North West. There he hoped to "see the savage in his native lair."

LIFE ON THE RESERVE

Jefferson managed to get a job teaching school on Chief Red Pheasant's reserve near Battleford. He taught the children to read and write in English and in Cree, and this helped him learn the language himself. The adventures of youth were over and he matured quickly. He later wrote of his stay there:

> During those six years that I resided among the Indians I learned and unlearned a great deal. Nearly all that I thought

I knew, I found incorrect. I had to begin again. I learned their language, I learned their character and customs; I learned their point of view. I saw how they were born, how they lived, and how they died.

Jefferson was young, open-minded, and sensitive enough to adapt to his new environment. He got along well with the Indians and eventually married a young woman from the reserve.

Half breeds and Indians in front of an Indian tepee.

The six years Jefferson spent on Red Pheasant's reserve marked a crucial time in the history of the North West. When he started teaching there the Indians still depended on buffalo meat for most of their food. When he left, the buffalo were nearly extinct. The people now depended on government rations, fish and game, and whatever food they could grow. Because he lived on a reserve, Jefferson was able to observe at first hand the abrupt change in the Indians' way of life.

When the Indians and the government signed treaties, both expected that the shift from buffalo hunting to farming would take place gradually. It was hoped that new settlers would help the Indians learn to farm and provide them with jobs. When the buffalo disappeared almost overnight the government was not prepared to feed the people as promised. It was reluctant to spend the money required, and the Indians had to agitate for better terms. When the rush of settlers failed to materialize, the government also had to find other ways to teach them how to farm.

At this point Jefferson was ready for a change, and in 1884 he was appointed farm instructor on Chief Poundmaker's reserve. His ability to speak Cree and his knowledge of Indian life made him a far better teacher than the average Ontario "lumberman" who was hired to do the job. Many of these men were arrogant and domineering, and came into conflict with the proud and independent Indians.

Even when the Indians had adequate tools, oxen and seed and were blessed with good farm instructors, success did not come easily. Poor weather, crop diseases and

Indians trading at Battleford in 1881.

pests constantly plagued them. For several years in a row Jefferson saw Poundmaker and his band struggle to grow crops, only to see them fail.

In the midst of these hardships and frustrations the government decided to reduce the Indians' rations. They were given only enough food to keep them alive and they were often hungry. The government also reduced the decision-making powers of the agents and farm instructors who knew local conditions.

AN UGLY CONFRONTATION

In June 1884 Jefferson witnessed an ugly confrontation which grew out of these new policies. The trouble started when an Indian asked John Craig, the farm instructor on Red Pheasant's reserve, for food for his sick daughter. Craig refused to give him the food and when the Indian persisted Craig pushed him out of his storehouse. The Indian picked up an axe handle and struck Craig on the arm. Craig's pride was likely hurt more than his arm but he complained to the local police. They asked Superintendent Crozier to come from Battleford to help them make an arrest.

Crozier responded with far more force than was necessary and interrupted a ceremonial dance. When the Indians refused to hand over the offender Crozier fortified Jefferson's house and sent for reinforcements. It was a highly volatile situation, with over 2 000 enraged Indians facing Crozier's force of eighty-six men. Crozier did manage to get his man, thanks largely to the peacekeeping efforts of Chiefs Big Bear and Poundmaker. The situation was further eased when Crozier let Jefferson and others distribute provisions. Unfortunately, Ottawa did little to change its policies as a result of this and other confrontations.

THE METIS ASK FOR HELP

The Metis, too, were having difficulties with the government, and by the spring of 1885 they were on the brink of rebellion. They hoped to persuade the Indians to support them and made several unsuccessful attempts to do so. Even so, when Louis Riel defeated the North West Mounted Police at Duck Lake on March 26 Poundmaker still did not respond. He did take the opportunity to go to Battleford with most of his people to ask for food. Jefferson remained on the reserve. Some of the Indians

wished to kill him, and it was largely because of Poundmaker's influence that his life was spared.

On April 8 Riel sent the Indians a letter urging them to attack Battleford. He also asked that they send a group of fifty men to assist him at Batoche. The Metis envoy who brought the letter read it to Poundmaker, and Poundmaker showed it to Jefferson. Poundmaker urged his people not to take any action.

Letter from Louis Riel to the half-breeds and Indians of the Battleford region, April 8, 1885.

To the Half-breeds and Indians of Battleford and environs. Since we wrote you, important matters have occurred. The police came and attacked us. We met them. God gave us the victory. Thirty half-breeds and five Crees fought against one hundred and twenty men. After a fight of thirty-five or forty minutes, the enemy took to flight.

Bless God with us for the success He has kindly granted us. Rise. Face the police. If you possibly can, if the thing is not already done, take Fort Battleford. Destroy it. Save all the goods and provisions and come to us. With your numbers you can send us a detachment of forty to fifty men.

All that you do, do it for the love of God under the protection of Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Virgin of St. Joseph, and of St. John the Baptist.

Be certain that faith works wonders.

LOUIS 'DAVID' RIEL, Exovede*

Pierre Parenteau	Donald Ross
Charles Trottier	Pierre Garrièpy
Bte. Boucher	Damas Carrière
Pierre Henry	Antoine Jobin

* Riel used the term "exovede" to indicate that he was "one of the flock."

Later in the month Riel again asked for help and the warriors decided to send him a letter of support. The letter was dictated by the Indians and written by Jefferson. It stated:

> Here we have killed six white men. We have not taken the barracks yet, but that is the only entire building in Battleford. All the cattle and horses in the vicinity we have taken . . . We have guns and rifles of all sorts, but ammunition for them is short . . . We wait still for you, as we are unable to take the fort without help.

Poundmaker apparently went along with the warriors' wishes as his name appeared on the letter. However, at Poundmaker's trial Jefferson refused to swear that Poundmaker had authorized the use of his name.

CUT KNIFE HILL

Poundmaker was able to keep his people from actively supporting Riel until Colonel Otter launched a surprise attack on them at Cut Knife Hill on May 2. On that morning Jefferson was awakened by yelling and the shrieking of shells. "When the first soldiers came to the summit of the rise," noted Jefferson, "they saw the Indians — like ants disturbed in their hill — streaming in all directions away from the tents . . . a few Indians who had hastily armed themselves jumped on their ponies and rushed to meet the danger." He immediately went to Poundmaker's tent, where he saw the chief putting on his war-cloak. When Poundmaker left, Jefferson hid well out of sight of the fighting. Afterwards he heard all about the victory from Poundmaker and the other Indians.

Buoyed by the Indians' success, Riel's supporters urged them to head to Batoche. Riel also sent a note telling them of his success at Fish Creek and asking again for help. Poundmaker tried to lead his people in another direction but the warriors' wishes prevailed. Soon after this, the group encountered a wagon train carrying supplies from Swift Current to Battleford. The supplies were seized and most of the drivers taken prisoner.

The surrender of Chief Poundmaker to General Middleton at Battleford, May 26, 1885.

THE INDIANS SURRENDER

A few days later the Indians heard of Riel's defeat at Batoche. Jefferson was asked to carry a message from Poundmaker to General Middleton asking for the terms of surrender. He returned with a message from Middleton telling Poundmaker to surrender unconditionally at Battleford. On May 26 Jefferson witnessed the event, and has left this account:

> Poundmaker rose and came forward to accost the General, holding out his hand but Middleton waved aside the proffered salute saying that he did not shake hands with rebels. The Indian gathered his blanket around him and resumed his seat, while Middleton proceeded to reprimand him for taking up arms and murdering innocent settlers. The chief replied that he had murdered nobody; that he had defended himself when attacked, which he thought he was entitled to do; but they now came to give themselves up; the General had them in his hands and could work his will upon them.

Jefferson sympathized with Poundmaker and was grateful to him for many things. Nevertheless he was later pressured into being a crown witness at Poundmaker's trial, as well as at Riel's, to save himself from suspicion of treason.

IDEAS FOR PROJECTS

1. Pretend that the Indians and the Canadian militia who took part in the Battle of Cut Knife Hill decided to bury a time capsule to be dug up at a future date. Describe the items each side might have put into its capsule. Illustrate your report.
2. Prepare a jacket for a book on one of the people in this chapter. Include the title and author and write a short description of the book and the author (yourself).
3. In a description of the Battle of Cut Knife Hill published in the Montreal *Gazette* on May 7, 1885, a reporter stated that Otter's forces achieved a decisive victory, completely routing an Indian force of 600 braves. He claimed that the militia killed or wounded at least 100. Research what actually happened at the Battle of Cut Knife Hill and report on the accuracy of this report.
4. Read the following accounts of the conversation between General Middleton and Chief Poundmaker prior to the latter's surrender on May 26. Write a paragraph summarizing the arguments made by each man.

   Donald Barnett. *Poundmaker*. pp. 47-48.
   Major Boulton. *Reminiscences of the North-West Rebellions*. pp. 358-60.
   H.A. Kennedy. *The Book of the West*. pp. 112-14.
   C.P. Mulvaney. *The North-West Rebellion of 1885*. pp. 384-93.
   Norma Sluman. *Poundmaker*. pp. 240-47.
   J.P. Turner. *The North-West Mounted Police*. pp. 199-201.

5. Use the following quotations as inspiration for reports, class discussions or political cartoons:

   "The great Cree Chief's [Poundmaker's] continued and determined opposition to the rebellion of 1885 was all that prevented the Canadian North-West from becoming plunged into an Indian war."

   Mary Weekes

   "[Poundmaker] raised the war-cry and carried the torch to every homestead in his reach."

   Saskatchewan Herald, 1885

   "In every major battle — Duck Lake, Fish Creek, Batoche, Cut Knife Hill, and Frenchman's Butte [Red Deer Creek] — the native rebels held set positions against advancing government forces. They never once took the offensive in the campaign."

   Jack F. Dunn

   "Everything I could do was done to prevent bloodshed. Had I wanted war, I would not be here now. I would be on the prairie. You did not catch me. I gave myself up. You have me because I wanted peace."

   Chief Poundmaker

   "Poundmaker was tried and convicted on evidence that, in any ordinary trial would have ensured his acquittal without the jury leaving the box, but the prejudice against the Indians in the North-West was so great that he could not get a fair trial."

   George T. Denison

   "That Poundmaker should be sentenced to the ridiculously short term of three years imprisonment looks like making a farce of the whole business."

   Saskatchewan Herald, 1885.

5. Wandering Spirit vs Major Steele

When news of the Metis victory at Duck Lake arrived at Frog Lake Plains Cree Chief Big Bear was away hunting. His band was in a desperate condition, short of both food and clothing, and game was scarce. Some members of the band were very bitter about their plight. They were eager to fight the government, and now the Metis had asked for their help.

In Big Bear's absence war chief Wandering Spirit and his followers were able to take control. They decided to support the Metis cause by taking hostages. Events got out of hand. Nine settlers were killed at Frog Lake on April 2 and three people were taken hostage. A further twenty-eight people were taken hostage at Fort Pitt on April 15.

The news from Duck Lake, Frog Lake and Fort Pitt struck terror into the hearts of the people living throughout the North West. There were 26 000 Indians in the area and a general uprising was feared. In response to pleas for help, General Middleton asked Major-General Thomas Strange to take charge of the military forces in the District of Alberta. Strange was to lead a column of troops from Calgary to Edmonton, and then proceed down the North Saskatchewan River to Fort Pitt.

Although Strange was in command, the man he picked to scout for his column would play a more vital role in the events that followed. Major Samuel B. Steele was to be Wandering Spirit's main opponent at Red Deer Creek on May 28 and Loon Lake on June 3.

In this chapter you will meet:

WANDERING SPIRIT

As war chief of Big Bear's band, Wandering Spirit ordered the killing of nine men at Frog Lake. He took hostages there and at Fort Pitt, and fought the militia at Red Deer Creek and at Loon Lake. He eventually surrendered at Fort Pitt. He was tried at Battleford and was hung there with seven other Indians.

MAJOR SAMUEL B. STEELE

Major Steele led a group of scouts under General Strange. He fought war chief Wandering Spirit at Red Deer Creek and pursued the retreating Indians as far as Loon Lake.

THERESA DELANEY

Theresa Delaney was taken hostage by the Indians at Frog Lake and remained a captive for two months. Her husband was one of the men killed at Frog Lake. She later wrote a book about her experiences.

ELIZABETH McLEAN

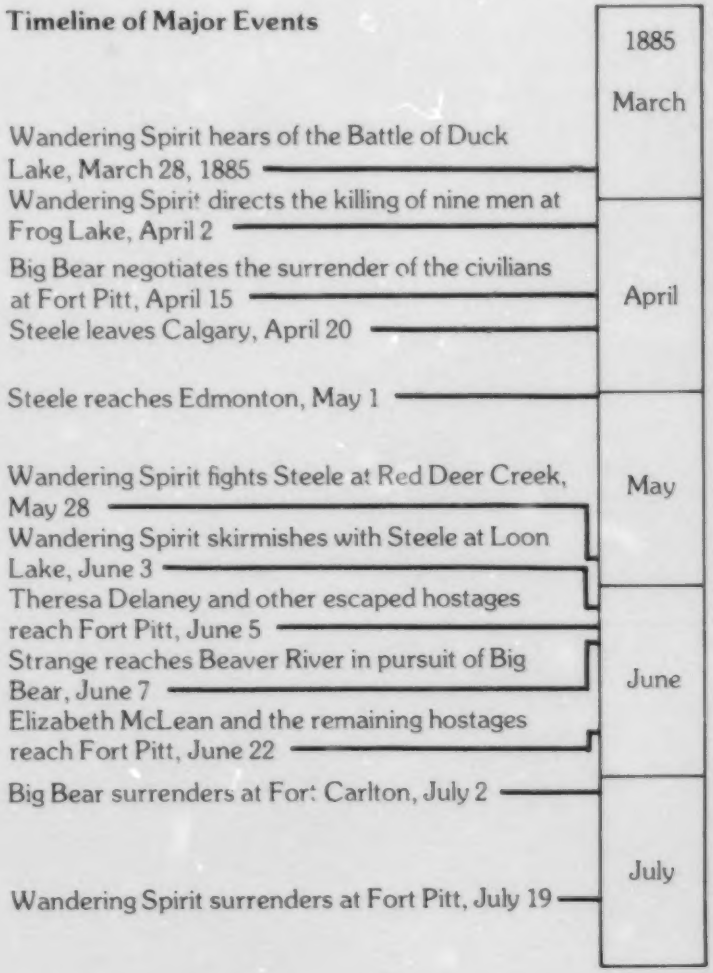
Elizabeth was the teenage daughter of the man in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company post at Fort Pitt. She and her family spent over two months as hostages of chief Big Bear's band.

READING WITH A PURPOSE

As you read this chapter do the following:

1. Refer to the chapter timeline and to the map at the end of the book. Be prepared to explain the importance of major events.
2. Try to determine what each person studied in the chapter might say about:
   (a) the reasons the Indians became involved in the rebellion
   (b) the illegal acts they committed
   (c) their treatment of their hostages
   (d) Big Bear's attempts to minimize bloodshed.
   Refer to the primary source materials found in each biography.
3. Try to decide:
   (a) who was the better military leader — Wandering Spirit or Samuel Steele?
   (b) which of these women suffered more during the rebellion — Theresa Delaney or Elizabeth McLean?
   Be prepared to defend your answers in a class discussion.

Timeline of Major Events


1885
March
April
May
June
July
Wandering Spirit hears of the Battle of Duck Lake, March 28, 1885
Wandering Spirit directs the killing of nine men at Frog Lake, April 2
Big Bear negotiates the surrender of the civilians at Fort Pitt, April 15
Steele leaves Calgary, April 20
Steele reaches Edmonton, May 1
Wandering Spirit fights Steele at Red Deer Creek, May 28
Wandering Spirit skirmishes with Steele at Loon Lake, June 3
Theresa Delaney and other escaped hostages reach Fort Pitt, June 5
Strange reaches Beaver River in pursuit of Big Bear, June 7
Elizabeth McLean and the remaining hostages reach Fort Pitt, June 22
Big Bear surrenders at Fort Carlton, July 2
Wandering Spirit surrenders at Fort Pitt, July 19

Wandering Spirit

War chief of Big Bear's band

Kapapamahchakwew (Wandering Spirit).

- Was born about 1845.
- Left the Fort Carlton district to join Chief Big Bear's band, 1879.
- Called a war council to discuss the Metis' defeat of the North West Mounted Police at Duck Lake, March 28, 1885.
- Took the inhabitants of Frog Lake prisoner, April 2, 1885.
- Shot Frog Lake Indian agent Thomas Quinn and priest Father Fafard, and ordered his men to kill the other male prisoners, April 2, 1885.
- Led an expedition to capture Fort Pitt, April 13, 1885.
- Spoke in favour of killing the white prisoners from Frog Lake and Fort Pitt but was opposed by Big Bear and the Wood Crees, around April 24, 1885.
- Led the Indian resistance at the Battle of Red Deer Creek, May 28, 1885.
- Fought Major Steele at Loon Lake, June 3, 1885.
- Surrendered at Fort Pitt along with the Wood Crees, July 19, 1885.
- Failed in an attempt to commit suicide, July 19, 1885.
- Was tried at Battleford for the murder of Thomas Quinn, September 22, 1885.
- Was hanged along with seven other Indians, November 27, 1885.

A HUNTER OF MEN

When the buffalo started to disappear from the North West, most of the Indian chiefs on the plains gave in to their fear of starvation. In return for help from Ottawa, they signed away their land and settled their people on reservations. Cree Chief Big Bear was reluctant to do so. Because of this, many rebellious Plains Crees were drawn to his band. Among them was the war chief Wandering Spirit.

Wandering Spirit was a man who had killed many Blackfoot in inter-tribal wars. He was, in one man's words, "cruel as the grave, a hunter of men, as proud of his record as any gold-laced general of his decorations." He was tall and quick, with dark and piercing eyes, and nearly everyone was afraid of him.

THE SEEDS OF REBELLION

Wandering Spirit was a very bitter man. He remembered the days when his people were proud and free — the days before the white settlers had come to the North West. The land belonged to the Indians then, not to the whites, and one day they would take it back.

On March 28, 1885, Wandering Spirit heard that the Metis had risen against the government and gained a victory at Duck Lake two days before. The Metis were now asking the Indians for help, and many were ready to give it. Wandering Spirit himself felt that the time was ripe for rebellion, and called a war council of the Wood Crees and Plains Crees. As Big Bear was away hunting, he and the other warriors had little trouble gaining control. They decided to take the white population at Frog Lake hostage.

THE WARRIORS STRIKE

On April 2 twelve settlers at Frog Lake were rounded up and sent to mass at the Roman Catholic Church. William Cameron, the only white male prisoner to survive the events that followed, later described the situation:

> A moment later there came the rattle of musketry from the door and looking out from beneath my arm I saw Wandering Spirit enter. He moved cat-like on his moccasined feet to the centre of the church and dropped on his right knee there, his Winchester clutched in his right hand, the butt resting on the floor. His lynx-skin war bonnet, from which depended [hung] five large eagle plumes, crowned his head; his eyes burned and his hideously-painted face was set in lines of deadly menace. Never shall I forget the feelings his whole appearance and action excited in me as I watched in stupefied amazement while he half-knelt, glaring up at the altar and the white-robed priests in sacrilegious mockery. He was a demon, a wild animal, savage, ruthless, thirsting for blood. I doubted then that we would any of us ever again see the outside of the chapel.

After the service Wandering Spirit ordered Indian agent Thomas Quinn to go to the Indian camp. Quinn refused. When Wandering Spirit asked him a second time and was again refused, the Indian lost his temper and shot Quinn in the head. He then ordered his warriors to kill the rest of the male prisoners. Wandering Spirit himself shot priest Father Fafard because he felt that the priests sympathized with the whites. Big Bear tried to stop the slaughter but could not. When it was over nine men were dead.

Mistahimaskwa (Chief Big Bear). Chief Big Bear was unable to stop the killings at Frog Lake.

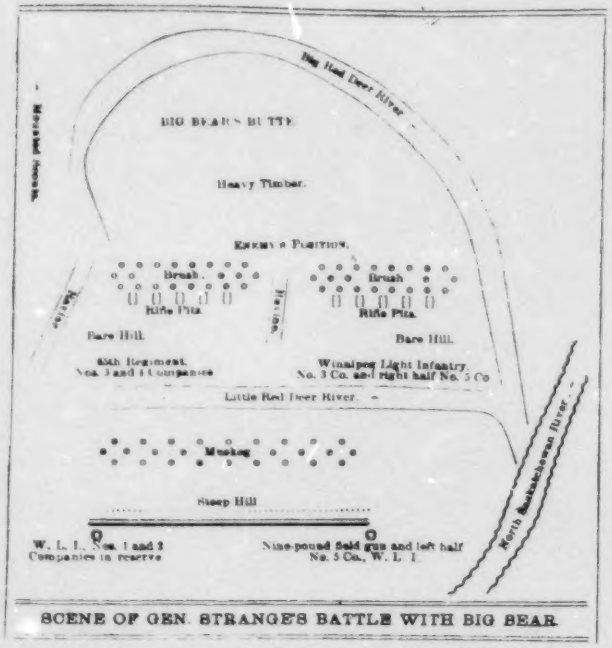
CAPTURE OF FORT PITT

Once the Hudson's Bay Company store and the settlers' homes and church had been looted and burned, Wandering Spirit led his 250 warriors to Fort Pitt. He wanted to support Louis Riel by attacking the fort and killing the North West Mounted Police stationed there. Chief Big Bear, though, wanted a bloodless settlement. This time Wandering Spirit listened to him. He took the twenty-eight civilians hostage and let the police escape unharmed.

In spite of his success at Frog Lake and Fort Pitt, Wandering Spirit was far from happy. When he began the attack at Frog Lake he had promised himself that he "would never again look on a white man but kill him." Taking hostages was a mistake. He knew that some of them were trying to encourage a fatal split between the Wood Crees and the more warlike Plains Crees. He also knew the military importance of unity, and it took all of his ability as a diplomat to keep the two groups together.

BATTLE OF RED DEER CREEK

The Indians, with their prisoners, were now moving slowly in the direction of Riel's forces. On May 27 Major General Strange's men caught up to them at Frenchman's Butte, where they had stopped to hold a Thirst Dance. Hostage William Cameron later wrote that when the soldiers were sighted, Wandering Spirit appeared riding a tall grey mare, her sides streaked with paint and her tail and mane adorned with eagle plumes. With his eyes



A map of the battle of Red Deer Creek which appeared in the Winnipeg Daily Times *in 1885.*

flashing he circled the camp at a mad gallop, shouting the long war cry of the Crees. After drawing Strange's fire, the Crees moved about three kilometres north to Red Deer Creek.*

* The battle which took place here is generally referred to as the Battle of Frenchman's Butte.

The next morning Wandering Spirit positioned his troops in trenches at the top of a ridge overlooking the creek. He hoped to lure the soldiers into launching a frontal attack. Strange's men could then be picked off in the swamp at the bottom of the ravine or when they tried to climb the steep, grassy slope in front of his men. Unfortunately for the Indians, Major Steele tested the swamp and scouted the grassy hill. He told Strange that a frontal attack was impossible. Strange then sent Steele's scouts to probe the Indian defences along the west side of the ridge. Wandering Spirit saw this movement and led a group of mounted warriors along the ridge to prevent the scouts from crossing the valley.

Despite their strong defensive position, the Indians

General Strange's men firing a nine-pounder field gun at Wandering Spirit's position across Red Deer Creek.

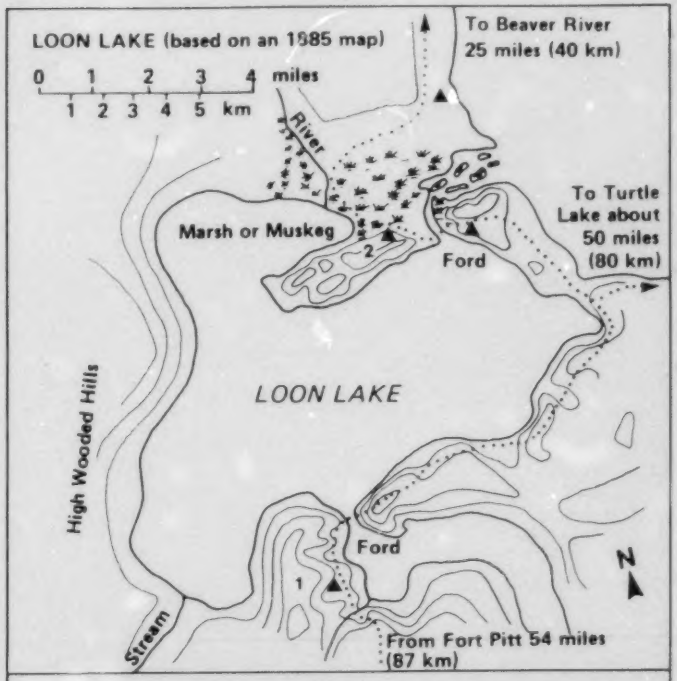
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

suffered badly from the soldiers' nine-pounder cannon. They called the cannon "the gun that speaks twice" because it made a noise when it was fired and another when the shell burst. Wandering Spirit had his men cover the rifle pits with logs for protection but the shrapnel still caused heavy losses. General Strange was also having problems. He was outnumbered nearly three to one and was running short of ammunition. Both sides at last withdrew from the inconclusive engagement. While Strange waited for more men, Big Bear's band retreated northward.

SKIRMISH AT LOON LAKE

When Major Steele caught up with the Indians at Loon Lake on June 3, Wandering Spirit once again rallied his men. One of the troops later said of the war chief: "Had half the Indians been as good a fighter as he was not a man of us would have got out."

Despite Wandering Spirit's heroic efforts, most of the Crees saw that their cause was hopeless. One of the hostages was sent to ask for peace. He waved a white flag but his efforts were ignored by the troops. The Crees then retreated to the north end of Loon Lake. There the split in the Cree forces that Wandering Spirit had tried to prevent finally took place. The Wood Crees moved to the north and the Plains Crees under Big Bear moved to the east. The Indian resistance had collapsed. Wandering Spirit was so disheartened that he left his comrades and joined the Wood Crees. He would later even surrender with them to the authorities at Fort Pitt.


LOON LAKE (based on an 1885 map)
0 1 2 3 4 miles
1 2 3 4 5 km
To Beaver River
25 miles (40 km)
River
Marsh or Muskeg
2
Ford
To Turtle
Lake about
50 miles
(80 km)
LOON LAKE
High Wooded Hills
Ford
1
N
Stream
From Fort Pitt 54 miles
(87 km)
1. Major Steele and Wandering Spirit fought here on June 3, 1885.
2. General Middleton ended his pursuit of the Crees at this point on June 10.
▲ Camping places used by the Crees during their retreat.
. . . Trail
Contour lines (contour interval 50 feet or 15.2 metres)

Map of Loon Lake.

A COPPER JEKYLL AND HYDE

Wandering Spirit was described by one of his hostages as "a copper Jekyll and Hyde,"* a man "capable of any devilry when the passions of the savage held sway, yet kind and gentle to his family and to others in his calmer moods." In defeat his gentler side appeared, and at least three of his prisoners saw the man behind the warrior.

Elizabeth McLean and her mother got to know Wandering Spirit because of his habit of visiting their campfire in the evening. Once he knew Mrs. McLean well enough to confide in her, he asked her what God would do to a man who had done what he had at Frog Lake. He seemed to be very sorry for his acts and was not at all reassured when Mrs. McLean told him that he would be punished for his sins. From that point on they noticed that his jet black hair was turning grey, and when they last saw him it was almost white.

After the Wood Crees and Plains Crees parted company on June 6 the prisoners were very happy to escape to the north of Loon Lake with the more peaceful Wood Crees. On the evening of June 7 they saw, much to their surprise, the sad and dejected figure of Wandering Spirit coming down the hill toward their camp. According to sixteen year old Elizabeth:

> He walked very slowly toward us, uncertain of his welcome. There was a solemn stillness throughout the camp. One could even hear the crackling of the twigs in the fire. At first not a word was spoken, but my mother broke the spell by exclaiming compassionately, "Give him a cup of tea, poor fellow!" From then on, Wandering Spirit was accepted as one of our camp.

When the decision was made on June 17 to free the prisoners, Wandering Spirit urged the Wood Crees to give them food and clothing for their return journey.

LAST DAYS

Hostage William Cameron also broke through Wandering Spirit's cold exterior. After the rebellion Cameron resumed his work as a trader and Wandering Spirit became a prisoner at Fort Pitt. On the day of his surrender there he tried to take his own life by plunging a long sheath knife into his heart. Cameron was touched with a strange, unreasoning pity for the war chief. In return for Wandering Spirit's only dime and the knife he had used to try to kill himself, he gave the Indian's daughter a generous supply of food for her father. Later, when Wandering Spirit was imprisoned at Battleford, Cameron gave him some tobacco as a gift. Wandering Spirit crossed his arms upon his knees and buried his face in his blanket. Cameron was amazed and asked himself: "Had a trifling kindness from me melted the man of blood?"

At his trial Wandering Spirit admitted that he had killed Quinn, and was sentenced to hang. On the day of his execution he spoke not a word. According to the Crees who witnessed his death, he hummed a love song to his wife as he stood on the scaffold with the noose around his neck.

* In a book by Robert Louis Stevenson, Dr. Jekyll discovers a drug which turns him into the brutal Mr. Hyde, and another which makes him return to normal. The term "Jekyll and Hyde" refers to the good and evil which can exist in one person.

Major Samuel B. Steele

Commander of the cavalry and scouts

- Was born in Purbrook, Canada West, January 5, 1851.
- Joined the militia during the Fenian raids of 1865-66.
- Served in the 1st Ontario Rifles under Colonel Wolseley during the Red River Expedition, 1870-71.
- Enlisted in the first unit of the Canadian Permanent Force, 1871.
- Joined the North West Mounted Police as a sergeant-major, November 3, 1873.
- Commanded the cavalry and scouts of Major-General Strange's Alberta Field Force during the rebellion, April-July 1885.
- Fought the Crees at Red Deer Creek on May 28 and at Loon Lake on June 3, 1885.
- Assisted miners and settlers in the Kootenay region of B.C. by erecting Fort Steele, 1887.
- Was sent to police the White and Chilkoot passes during the Klondike gold rush, January 1898.
- Raised and commanded a corps of mounted riflemen during the Boer War, 1900-01.
- Served in the Canadian army, 1907-18.
- Published his memoirs, *Forty Years in Canada*, 1915.
- Died in Putney, England, on January 30, 1919, and was buried in Winnipeg, June 1919.

Samuel Steele (centre front) with his N.W.M.P. detachment before the rebellion.

A YOUNG SOLDIER

Samuel Steele's boyhood in Ontario did much to prepare him for success in his military career. He learned to ride and shoot and play all sorts of games. With his cousin, he built boats and rafts and roamed the trackless woods. There was nothing in the life of the backwoods pioneer that he did not know or wish to learn.

Steele grew up to be a strong and confident young man. He joined the militia at the age of fourteen and later turned down the command of a regiment he had raised and trained. He was only fifteen years old and felt that he was too young to command.

When Louis Riel confronted the Canadian government at Red River in 1870 many people felt that an expedition should be sent to punish him and his followers. They had, after all, challenged both the Hudson's Bay Company and the Queen. Steele sympathized with this point of view. He joined the Ontario Rifles and went to the west as a private.

The Red River Expedition was an excellent training ground for the young soldier. He later described the task of road building between Lake Superior and Lake Winnipeg as "the hardest task in my experience in the land of severe trials and strenuous pioneering." He also noted that Colonel Wolseley's example inspired his men to overcome all the obstacles in their way.

STEELE JOINS THE MOUNTED POLICE

In 1873 the North West Mounted Police force was formed by Sir John A. Macdonald. Steele was loyal to the government in Ottawa and to the ideals of progress, law and order. He also had a strong sense of adventure. These traits made him an ideal recruit for the new force.

The years 1873-85 were busy ones for the police and for Steele. The force had to halt the whiskey trade, keep the Indians from fighting with their traditional foes, stop horse stealing, protect homesteaders, and maintain order among unruly railroad workers. It took a person with a great deal of drive and energy to lead the men during this difficult time. It also took a man with unlimited courage. Steele had this courage and showed it many times.

One instance bears special mention. In 1884 he led two of his men and an interpreter to Chief Crowfoot's Sun Dance camp to arrest a Metis who was "stirring up trouble" among the Blackfoot. This was the third time in recent weeks that the man had been arrested. Although Crowfoot was openly hostile, Steele coolly made the arrest in the middle of the chief's camp.

INDIAN HARDSHIPS

The late 1870's and early 1880's also brought dramatic changes in the Indian and Metis way of life. As a member of the police Steele saw the hardships this caused. He wrote in his memoirs that the slaughter of the buffalo for their hides had "resulted in the wretched Indians, once the wealthiest and happiest of primitive races, being forced to

loiter about the frontier posts and villages, to live on garbage . . . not fit for hogs to eat." He knew that many of them would have starved to death if the police and Indian agents had not fed them.

STEELE'S SCOUTS

When rebellion broke out in the spring of 1885, Steele left his job with the North West Mounted Police to join the Canadian militia. He was appointed a major and given command of the cavalry and scouts of the Alberta Field Force. Major-General Strange paid him the compliment of calling the mounted corps Steele's Scouts.

Because of the police defeat at Duck Lake and the slaying of whites at Frog Lake, the people of Alberta were in a state of alarm. Everyone wanted protection.

Some members of the "cowboy cavalry" hired at Calgary by General Strange in April 1885.

Strange was ordered north to restore the settlers to their homes and bring the Frog Lake murderers to justice. Steele was put in command of the advance guard which left Calgary on April 20.

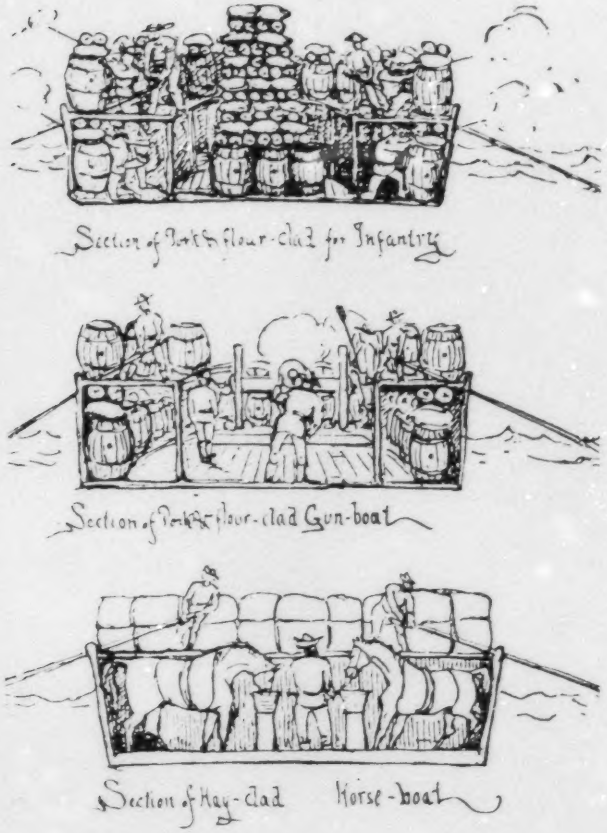
MARCH TO FORT PITT

The force headed north to Edmonton, and arrived there on May 1 to a joyous welcome and a salute from the fort's four-pounder gun. From Edmonton, scows were to transport the infantry, one nine-pounder field gun, horses and supplies down the North Saskatchewan River to Fort Pitt. Steele rode the Edmonton-Pitt-Carlton trail along with his scouts as the advance and flank guards for the river column.

Evidence of the rebellion was found at Frog Lake and Fort Pitt. At Frog Lake the men found the bodies of several of the men killed there by Wandering Spirit's warriors. At Fort Pitt they found the mutilated body of a police scout beside a stake on which his heart was impaled.

ENCOUNTER AT PIPESTONE CREEK

Soon after the arrival of the militia at Fort Pitt, the Indians' trail was found to the northeast. Steele was sent with two officers and ninety mounted men to locate the enemy, a group of over 500 Crees. About midnight on May 26 he ran into a scouting party of Crees at Pipestone Creek, five kilometres from Fort Pitt. One of the warriors took two shots that just missed Steele's head, and was killed by one of Steele's men. After the



Scows used to transport horses and supplies down the North Saskatchewan River (shown in cross section).

skirmish the Indian scouts galloped off. The Indian killed was one who had protected the Crees' white prisoners when the war chief wished to kill them. It was later found that one of the scouts had taken his scalp as a trophy.

The next morning Steele's men met Indian scouts again a little further along the trail. Steele found their camp and sent word to Strange that his scouts had counted 187 lodges. Steele then waited for Strange to arrive with the field gun. When the militia arrived the men marched another three kilometres and found the Indians at Frenchman's Butte. Steele saw them "galloping in a circle to warn their camp, their excellent horsemanship and wild appearance making a remarkable picture as they were silhouetted against the blue sky." After a few rounds from the field gun, Steele advanced and took the butte.

Steele's scouts in action at Pipestone Creek, May 26, 1885.

BATTLE OF RED DEER CREEK

Early on the morning of May 28, Steele located the Indians on a thickly wooded ridge on the north side of Red Deer Creek. Their war chief, Wandering Spirit, had selected a fine defensive position. He had had his men dig rifle pits among the trees at the top of the ridge, and they had an unobstructed view of the creek below. The creek bed itself was very marshy. When Steele sent some men to scout it they sank up to their waists in mud. Meanwhile the Indians' bullets flew like hailstones. Steele was ordered to turn the enemy's right while General Strange pounded their position with shrapnel from the cannon. Steele found their right too long to turn, but the shrapnel attack was more successful.

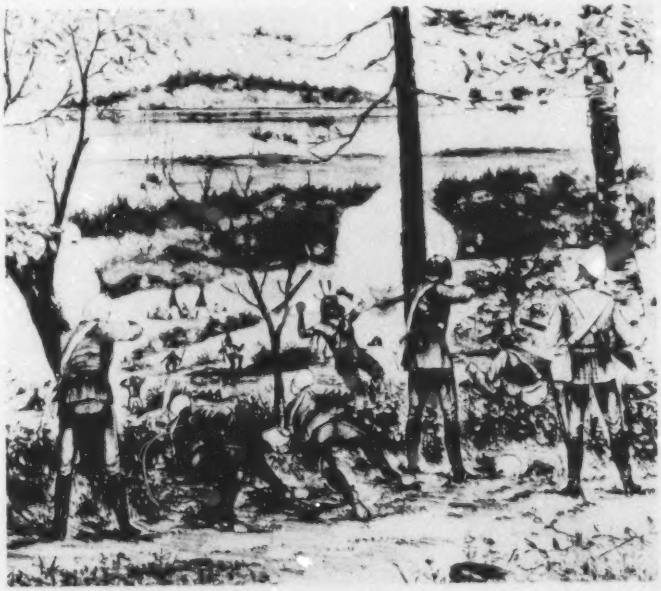
The men were now running low on food and ammunition. Instead of advancing, Strange decided to return to Fort Pitt and wait for General Middleton and his troops. Steele's men dismounted in order to cover their withdrawal but Wandering Spirit did not pursue them. In fact, the Indians had themselves begun a retreat to the north. The men later referred to the action at Red Deer Creek as the battle of "Stand Off Coulee."

SKIRMISH AT LOON LAKE

On June 1 Steele found that the Indians had deserted their rifle pits on the ridge and moved north. The following day some of his scouts found five of their hostages who had escaped. The Crees still held most of the hostages taken at Frog Lake and Fort Pitt, and Steele now set off with sixty-five men to follow them. Middleton had by this time landed at Fort Pitt, and Steele expected him to send his mounted troops in support.

On June 3 Steele's men caught up to the large group of Indians at Loon Lake. Instead of waiting for reinforcements, Steele boldly led an attack. The Indians were breaking camp and fording the lake at a narrow point. Steele's men forced them across the ford. Steele then hoisted a white flag while one of his men tried without success to get them to surrender.

Unfortunately, Steele was now down to one day's rations and fifteen rounds of ammunition per man. Three



The skirmish at Loon Lake, June 3, 1885.

of his men were wounded and Middleton had not yet arrived. Steele therefore withdrew his men and waited until Middleton appeared on June 5.

END OF THE CAMPAIGN

Despite Steele's protest, the general and his staff decided that the muskeg to the north of Loon Lake was impassible. At this point the men withdrew to Fort Pitt, and Steele waited there while Middleton pursued the Indians. The search was futile.

Steele's skirmish with Wandering Spirit's forces at Loon Lake had convinced the Crees that they could not resist much longer. They at last freed their prisoners, who made their way to Fort Pitt. In order to end the pursuit of his people, Big Bear surrendered on July 2 at Fort Carlton. Wandering Spirit, Steele's real opponent, surrendered at Fort Pitt on July 19. The force was split up and Major Steele led the cavalry back to Calgary. They were given a heroes' welcome there, and then disbanded.

Steele's role in the rebellion was summed up by his commanding officer, General Strange: "Major Steele and his cavalry were the eyes, ears and feelers of the force, and their spirited pursuit of Big Bear crowned with success the long and weary march which they had protected and to a certain extent guided." Strange recommended that Steele be honoured for his efforts. General Middleton himself had very little to say about the roles Strange and Steele had played in the rebellion. In the end, both were ignored and Middleton remained the only one to be rewarded by the government.

Major-General Thomas Bland Strange commanded the column sent in pursuit of Chief Big Bear's band.

Theresa Delaney

A settler from Frog Lake

Theresa Delaney.

- Was born Theresa Fulford and brought up near Alymer, Quebec.
- Married John Delaney in Aylmer, July 27, 1882, and moved to Frog Lake, District of Saskatchewan.
- Was advised to move to Fort Pitt because of the North West Mounted Police defeat at Duck Lake but remained at Frog Lake with the other settlers, March 30, 1885.
- Witnessed the murder of three people, including her husband, April 2, 1885.
- Was held captive by Big Bear's band for two months.
- Escaped with some of the other captives who made their way to Fort Pitt, June 2-5, 1885.
- Was re-united with her parents, brothers and sisters at their home near Aylmer, Quebec, July 14, 1885.
- Wrote *Two Months in the Camp of Big Bear* along with Theresa Gowanlock, 1885.
- Urged the government to release Chief Big Bear from prison, November 1886.
- Supported herself by various means, including teaching, until her death.
- Died, date unknown.

A LETTER OF WARNING

Theresa Delaney and her husband had lived at Frog Lake for nearly three years when they received a letter from Inspector Francis Dickens of the North West Mounted Police. The Metis had defeated the police at Duck Lake a few days before, and there were fears that the Indians would support them. Dickens advised the Delaneys and the other settlers to move to Fort Pitt as soon as they could.

The Frog Lake settlement.

John Delaney was a successful and well-liked farm instructor at Frog Lake. He knew the local Indians and felt that they could be trusted. After much talk, the white people of Frog Lake decided to remain where they were, and sent the police detachment to Fort Pitt. In this way they hoped to show their confidence in the Indians and avoid provoking them.

On April 1 Mr. Delaney and Indian agent Thomas Quinn called a meeting with the Cree chiefs to give them the news from Duck Lake. Much to their surprise, the Indians already knew of the battle there. The Indians promised to keep the peace and to guard the settlers' horses. The following morning the white settlers found that their horses had been stolen, but not by the Metis. The Indians then relieved them of their guns, again to "defend" them against the half-breeds. In hopes of calming the Indians, Mr. Delaney agreed to let them kill an ox for food.

After breakfast the Indians took the Delaneys and the other whites to the church. The Indians, who had been drinking, were very noisy throughout the service, which the priests cut short. The white people were then ordered back to the Delaneys' house.

MURDER AT FROG LAKE

The Indians next told the settlers to go to Chief Big Bear's camp. On the way Mrs. Delaney saw Mr. Gowanlock, her husband and priest Father Fafard shot and killed by the Indians. She was dragged from her husband's side by an Indian and taken to his tepee.

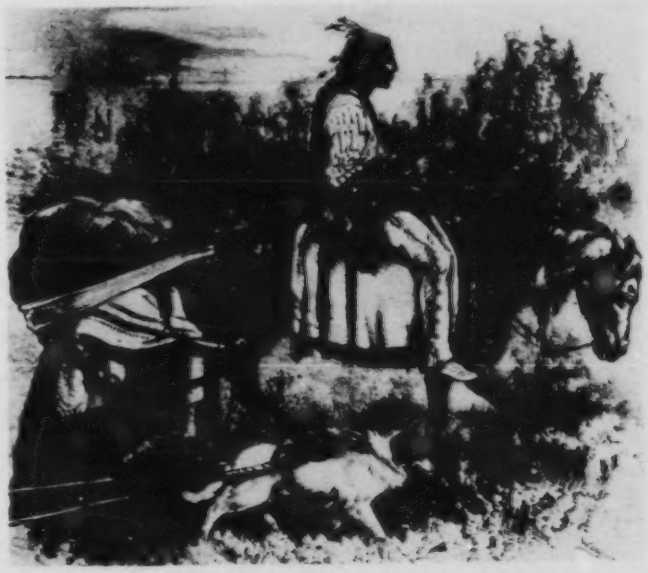
The killings at Frog Lake, April 2, 1885.

Fortunately two half-breeds, John Pritchard and Adolphus Nolin, were able to purchase her for two horses. Throughout their captivity she and Mrs. Gowanlock stayed with the Pritchard family. Pritchard and Nolin risked their own lives at times to protect them both from the Indians.

IN CAPTIVITY

Before she moved to the North West, Theresa Delaney's life had been a quiet one. In the two months after her capture it was filled with scene after scene of great drama. Moving with the Crees, she suffered the miseries of forced marches and a way of life quite strange to her. She has left us a vivid description of these hardships:

> There is no possibility of giving an idea of our sufferings. The physical pains, exposures, dangers, colds, heats, sleepless nights, long marches, scant food, poor raiment [clothing], etc., would be bad enough, — but we must not lose sight of the mental anguish, that memory, only too faithful, would inflict upon us, and the terror that alternate hope and despair would compel us to undergo. I cannot say which was the worst. But when united, our sad lives seemed to have passed beneath the darkest cloud that could possibly hang over them.



A Cree family on the move.

Mrs. Delaney saw Wandering Spirit and his warriors set off on their expedition to Fort Pitt, and saw them return with the prisoners they had taken. The larger group then moved toward Fort Pitt, passing Frog Lake on the way. There Mrs. Delaney saw the remains of the church, burned along with the bodies of her husband, Mr. Gowanlock and the priests.

On May 27 Major-General Strange finally caught up to Big Bear's group at Frenchman's Butte. The Indians were terrified by the shell fire from Strange's cannon there and at nearby Red Deer Creek the next day. Mrs. Delaney felt that they would have surrendered if Strange had continued to fight instead of retreating to Fort Pitt.

ESCAPE

After the battle the Indians retreated to the north. In the confusion, Mrs Delaney, Mr. Pritchard and many of the other hostages managed to escape and make their way to Fort Pitt. On her arrival there on June 5 Mrs. Delaney sent a dispatch to her parents in Aylmer, Quebec: "Arrived safely here today; and in good health; leave for home as soon as possible." She started for home on June 7 with Mrs. Gowanlock, and together they stopped at several towns along the way to visit friends. Many rumours about the Indians' treatment of them had spread during their captivity. To quell these, and to make some badly needed money, they wrote a book called *Two Months in the Camp of Big Bear*.

The rescue of Theresa Delaney and other captives by a party of scouts.

ASI

THE INDIAN PROBLEM

In this book Theresa Delaney gave her views on the condition of the Indians in the Frog Lake area. She felt that the government was generous in giving them instruction, food, money and tools, and that they had no grievances and no complaints to make. If a poor English, Scottish or Irish immigrant received half as much help in starting his farm he would consider his fortune made. She also thought it a great shame for the unhappy whites and half-breeds to sow the seeds of discontent among the Indians and draw them into their troubles.

Mrs. Delaney did realize the problems the Indians faced. She knew that although they were "a people easily instructed, quick to learn," they were not farmers by nature. They could not be expected to lose their nomadic and hunting instincts overnight. She explained it this way:

> Their habits are formed, their lives are directed in a certain line — like a sapling you can bend at will and when grown into a tree you can no longer change its shape — so with them. From time immemorial they have ranged the woods and it is not in the present nor even the next generation that you can uproot that inclination.

Mrs. Delaney had grown quite fond of the young Indian women she taught to do her housework. She felt that it was "too bad to see so many clever, naturally gifted, bright creatures left in ignorance and misery." She was on the whole happy with her life of useful joy, labour, peace and contentment.

Theresa Delaney felt that if anyone were to blame for the slowness of the Indians to adopt civilized ways, that blame would fall on the Hudson's Bay Company. The Company's success in the fur trade lay in leaving the Indians alone and discouraging settlement. The government, on the other hand, provided the Indians with food, tried to teach them to farm, educated them, and encouraged them to become Christians. She felt that the interests of the Hudson's Bay Company and the government were directly opposed.

HELPS BIG BEAR

Although Mrs. Delaney had suffered at the hands of the Indians, she had also received kindnesses from them. Chief Big Bear had visited the hostages the day after the Frog Lake incident and had expressed his sorrow at what his warriors had done. He had also defended the hostages many times during their captivity. Now the aging chief was in prison and his health was failing rapidly. Mrs. Delaney and Mrs. Gowanlock, among others, urged the government to release him. He was released at last in July 1887 and died the following January.

Elizabeth M. McLean

A sixteen year old hostage

- Was born at Fort Liard, North West Territories, April 9, 1869.
- Was educated at St. John's Ladies' College in Winnipeg.
- Lived at various Hudson's Bay Company posts and moved with her family to Fort Pitt in October 1884.
- Was present when Fort Pitt was surrounded by 250 Cree warriors, April 13, 1885.
- Joined the rest of her family and the other civilians when they surrendered to the Indians, April 15, 1885.
- Was with the Indians when Major-General Strange's troops engaged them at Red Deer Creek, May 28, 1885.
- Witnessed Major Steele's attack on the Indians at Loon Lake, June 3, 1885.
- Was released by the Wood Crees, along with the other prisoners, on June 17 and reached Fort Pitt on June 22, 1885.
- Moved to Winnipeg, 1892.
- Died in Winnipeg, April 5, 1947.

Elizabeth McLean (centre).

A FUR TRADER'S DAUGHTER

Elizabeth McLean was the daughter of William McLean, a Scottish trader who worked for the Hudson's Bay Company. She was born at the Company post at Fort Liard and lived with her family at various posts in the North West. She also spent some time at a girls' school in Winnipeg, and was probably much like most city girls her age. In the winter she spent time singing, playing the banjo, fiddle and organ, and playing cribbage and checkers.

BAD NEWS IN THE NIGHT

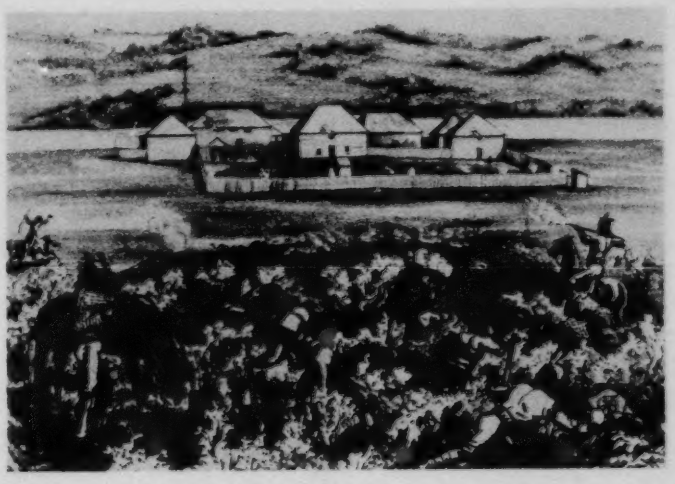
When the rebellion broke out, Elizabeth's father was the chief trader of the Company's post at Fort Pitt. Twenty-four North West Mounted Police were stationed there, and when news arrived of the Battle of Duck Lake, many people came to the fort to seek their protection. The police were led by Inspector Francis Dickens, son of the famous English novelist Charles Dickens.

Sixteen year old Elizabeth was in the fort on April 3 when several people arrived at one o'clock in the morning. They brought news that nine people had been killed by the Indians at Frog Lake. Elizabeth and the other women held lamps and candles while the men barricaded the windows and doors of the buildings with sacks of flour. The men also filled the spaces between the buildings with carts, wagons, cordwood and logs.

In the morning Elizabeth's father swore in each civilian in the fort as a special constable. Elizabeth, two of her sisters and a brother were included. For the next two weeks she took her turn as a sentry from three to five every afternoon, and joined the others in shooting practice with rifles and revolvers.

SURROUNDED!

On April 11 Mr. McLean decided to build a large flat boat or scow to carry the civilians and police down the river to Battleford as soon as the ice broke up. Elizabeth was on sentry duty on April 13 when the appearance of 250 Indians on the ridge to the north of the fort disrupted his plans. The Indians demanded that the occupants of the fort surrender. Elizabeth watched as her father went out to



Fort Pitt under seige, April 14, 1885.

talk with them that day and the next. She also watched as three scouts, sent out to look for the Indians on the morning of April 13, tried to ride through the Indian camp to the fort on April 14. From the top floor of her home she saw one escape, and saw the Indians kill one and wound another. When the latter was rescued by a Company clerk, Elizabeth found clean sheets for her mother to use as bandages.

Elizabeth had been brought up with Indian children and spoke the Cree and Salteaux languages as well as English. She knew the Indians well and was not afraid of them. Because of this she went with one of her sisters to see their father as he talked with the Crees. The girls may have been more naive than brave, but the Indians were impressed by their courage.

SURRENDER AND CAPTIVITY

Elizabeth's father at last came to an agreement with the Indians. The police would be allowed to escape and the civilians would surrender. Elizabeth saw the police drag the scow down to the river, and shared the fears of the other prisoners for their safety. The river was now a raging torrent filled with huge slabs of ice, and some of the young Indians raced on horseback to the river and began to fire on the men. The twenty-eight civilians then marched out of the fort to surrender.

The next day Elizabeth and her sister Amelia went down to the fort to see if they could save some of their things. By accident one of the Indians stepped on the pedals of the McLean's organ, and the noise terrified the others. Amelia suggested that they step on the pedals and press down on the keys at the same time. The sound that resulted caused the Indians to chop the organ to pieces and set fire to it.

The evacuation of Fort Pitt by the North West Mounted Police, April 15, 1885.

On another occasion, Elizabeth wandered off by herself. As she was walking along enjoying the beauty of the spring

flowers and the singing of the birds, a young Indian came galloping towards her. She turned down his offer of a ride, and he was gallant enough to ride away. Elizabeth was calm at the time, but could hardly stand up afterwards. Her mother was also very frightened. The Indian women knew that some of the young braves were interested in Elizabeth and her sisters. They were very protective of the girls and sometimes hid them in their own tents.

After the Indians had looted the fort, Elizabeth and the others went with them to Frog Lake. There she saw the body of one of the men who had been killed on April 2 propped up against a tree in a sitting posture, with a pipe stuck in his mouth. After about two weeks the group returned to Fort Pitt, where the Indians again looted and burned the buildings. Their next major stop was Frenchman's Butte, where the prisoners celebrated the Queen's birthday and the Indians held a Thirst Dance.

SKIRMISH AT LOON LAKE

While the Indians and their prisoners were at the butte they sighted General Strange's troops. In a great hurry, the Indians and hostages moved camp to the valley of nearby Red Deer Creek. The prisoners were forced to hike north during the battle there the next day, and Elizabeth did not see the fighting. She did see the Indians engage Major Steele's troops at Loon Lake a few days later.

When Steele caught up to them there on June 3 most of the party had already crossed a narrow ford across the lake. The rest of the Indians had to cross the open area exposed to the fire of Steele's men. Elizabeth's sister Kitty was with them. Luckily, one of Steele's men recognized Kitty's golden hair and told the rest to stop firing. In the middle of the fighting Elizabeth's father was asked by the Indians to try to arrange a truce. He waved a white flag and shouted at Steele's troops from a hill overlooking the ford, but the troops ignored his efforts.

Several Indians had been killed during the withdrawal, and the Plains Crees wanted to kill five white men in revenge. The prisoners suffered several anxious days when they learned of this. The more friendly Wood Crees, who knew Elizabeth's father from his days at Fort Qu'Appelle, protected the McLean family. Soon after, the Wood Crees and the prisoners managed to slip away from the Plains Crees.

Wagons crossing a muskeg during the pursuit of Chief Big Bear's band.

ESCAPE

While the Plains Crees marched east, the prisoners marched north with the Wood Crees. The group crossed the Beaver River and headed for Ile à la Crosse. The country they were now travelling through was very rough, with marsh and fallen timber. Their shoes were by then worn out, and some of the Indian women brought moccasins for them to wear.

Two weeks after the skirmish at Loon Lake, William McLean managed to persuade the Indians to release the prisoners near Lac des Isles. Aided by an Indian guide, Elizabeth, her family and the others reached Loon Lake on June 20. The next day they were met by Elizabeth's uncle, who took the McLeans by wagon to Fort Pitt. The war correspondent for the Toronto *Mail*, who travelled with the rescue party, observed that the McLeans and the others were unwashed and unkempt, with tattered clothing and little food, and very happy to be free after the weeks of terror and hardship they had endured. The McLeans arrived safely at Fort Pitt at four o'clock on the morning of June 22 and were given quarters on board the steamer Marquis. Elizabeth later wrote: "For the first time in over two months we had an opportunity to have a decent wash and change of clothing. We hardly recognized ourselves when we all came out clean and properly dressed."

A church parade at Fort Pitt. The McLean family reached Fort Pitt on June 22.

IDEAS FOR PROJECTS

1. Make a model of Wandering Spirit's war club or a scale model of Fort Pitt as it existed on April 13, 1885.
2. Prepare a dramatization of the events at Frog Lake on April 2, 1885. You may re-enact this scene outdoors and videotape it for showing to the class.
3. You are a radio reporter covering the Battle of Red Deer Creek. Prepare an "on the scene" report of what you saw on May 28, 1885. Make a tape recording of your report and play it to the class.
4. You are a war correspondent for the Montreal *Gazette* and you have managed to get a thirty minute interview with Wandering Spirit the night before his execution. Prepare a report on your interview.
5. Was Wandering Spirit a good or an evil man? Debate or discuss this in front of the class.
6. Prepare a tourist pamphlet encouraging people to visit Frog Lake, Fort Pitt, Frenchman's Butte, Red Deer Creek and Loon Lake. Illustrate the pamphlet with maps, photographs, paintings, etc.
7. Prepare a poster urging the citizens of Calgary to join the Alberta Field Force. Prepare a second poster urging the Metis living near Edmonton to support Louis Riel.
8. Use the following quotations as inspiration for term reports, class discussions or political cartoons:

"When I was in the Long Knives' [Americans'] country I had a dream, an ugly dream. I saw a spring shooting up out of the ground. I covered it with my hand, trying to smother it, but it spurted up between my fingers and ran over the back of my hand. It was a spring of blood."

Chief Big Bear

"At last [by April 2, 1885] the Indian department's patronage and penny pinching had blown the bitterness of Indian resentment into a flame that only blood would quench."

James G. MacGregor

"The two most prominent rebel chiefs, Big Bear and Poundmaker, were reluctantly being pushed forward by younger, more belligerent followers."

Desmond Morton and Reginald H. Roy

"Poundmaker and Big Bear . . . did not need much coaxing, but jumped at the chance of murder, plunder and debauchery."

John G. Donkin

"Duck Lake, Fort Carlton, and Fort Pitt had blown away the legend of the Mounties' invincibility as if it were a puff of smoke."

W. G. Hardy

"In a single thrust [at Loon Lake] Steele had smashed to pieces the savage band that had terrorized Alberta. He had also sprung loose the white prisoners, who were later released by the demoralized Wood Crees on their trek north."

Walter Stewart

"All the Queen's horses and all the Queen's men had not been able to catch him [Chief Big Bear]."

Howard Angus Kennedy

"I knew there was no hope for me [after Loon Lake]. Perhaps, I thought, if I sacrificed myself, the Government would not be so hard on the rest."

Wandering Spirit

6. The Personality Of Louis Riel

With the surrender of Riel and his Indian allies the rebellion was at an end. Chiefs Big Bear, Wandering Spirit and Poundmaker were put on trial, along with a number of other rebels, but Riel's trial attracted the most interest.

Soon after Riel's trial began it became apparent that his mind would be examined as carefully as his actions during the spring of 1885. His lawyers felt that there was no doubt he had led a rebellion against the government. They therefore based their defence on the claim that he was insane at the time.

As the trial progressed, witnesses gave conflicting evidence on Riel's state of mind and on his character. Unfortunately, some of the people who knew him best were not asked to testify.

In this chapter you will meet:

CHARLES NOLIN

Riel and his cousin Charles Nolin had clashed at the time of Riel's first confrontation with Ottawa in 1869. When Riel returned to Canada in 1884 the two worked together at first but the old animosity soon surfaced. Nolin opposed Riel in early March of 1885 and split with him at the time of the Battle of Duck Lake on March 26. He testified for the prosecution at Riel's trial.

EVELINA BARNABÉ

In the 1870's Riel spent a great deal of time at the home of Father Fabien Barnabé in Keeseville, New York. During this time he fell in love with Barnabé's sister Evelina and asked her to marry him. He later broke their engagement.

MARGUERITE MONET RIEL

Riel married Marguerite Monet, a Metis woman, in Montana in 1881. She was devoted to Riel and willingly gave up the life she knew to return to Canada with him in 1884. She was the person closest to him during the dramatic events of 1884 and 1885.

FATHER ALEXIS ANDRÉ

André was alarmed by Riel's strange religious beliefs and his hold on the Metis. He felt that Riel was insane and testified to this effect at his trial. He later served as Riel's prison chaplain and walked with him to the scaffold on the day of his execution.

READING WITH A PURPOSE

1. As you read this chapter try to determine what each person in this chapter could say to:
   (a) establish Riel's sanity
   (b) establish Riel's insanity
   (c) establish Riel's good character
   (d) discredit Riel's character.
   Refer to the primary source materials found in each biography.

Charles Nolin

Riel's cousin and opponent

- Was born in Pembina, North Dakota, 1835.
- Worked as a merchant and trader until 1869.
- Was one of six men chosen to prepare the list of rights to be presented to the government at Ottawa, January 1870.
- Was elected to the provincial government of Manitoba in late 1874 and served as minister of agriculture and minister without portfolio.
- Was forced to resign when his re-election was contested on the grounds of illegal election practices, 1873.
- Moved to Battleford in 1879 and to the Batoche area in 1882.
- Helped Riel draw up and get support for his petition to Ottawa, July-November 1884.
- Was forced to support the decision of the Metis to take up arms, March 19, 1885.
- Deserted the Metis cause just before the Battle of Duck Lake and escaped to Prince Albert; was imprisoned there from March 28 to May 23, 1885.
- Acted as the prosecution's key witness at the trials of Louis Riel and other rebels, July-August 1885.
- Was awarded $1 275 by the Commission on Rebellion Losses, 1886.
- Died at Lac de l'Outarde on January 28, 1905.

Charles Nolin.

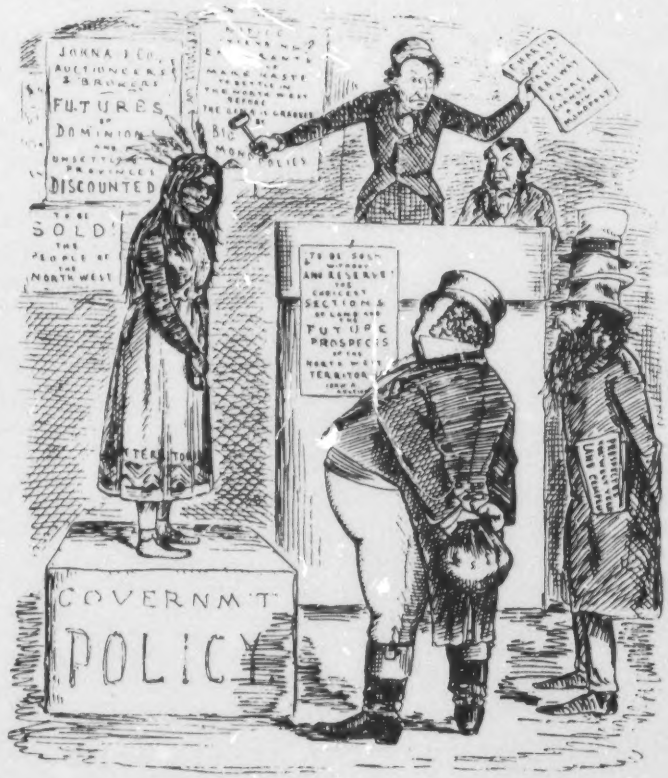
CLASH WITH RIEL

Charles Nolin was a cousin of Louis Riel and a long-time political opponent. The two men first clashed at the time of Riel's struggle with the Canadian government in 1869-70. At that time Riel demanded that the government grant Manitoba provincial status; he also felt that Ottawa should pay the people of Red River, and not the Hudson's Bay Company, for the land. Nolin did work to gain Metis rights but he did not support Riel fully. Riel felt that Nolin's personal ambition was to blame, and as a result Nolin was very nearly imprisoned by Riel's provisional government.

In the years that followed, Nolin was active in Manitoba politics. He also did well financially. Riel, in contrast, spent many years in exile and in poverty. When Nolin moved to the Saskatchewan District he was much better off than many of the Metis there. When they saw his large house they could not help but remember his past.

WORK ON BEHALF OF THE METIS

When Nolin moved to the Batoche area in 1882 the Metis were again pressing the government for their rights. They wanted all of their land surveyed into river lots, and wanted title to their land. Nolin was the best educated person in the community and he had also had three years' experience in politics in Manitoba. He was able and willing to join their new struggle with the government, and worked with Gabriel Dumont to draft a petition to the government. The petition was sent but had little effect. In the next two years the people sent many more petitions



STARTLING AFFAIR IN LONDON!

A PROMISING YOUNG WOMAN OFFERED FOR SALE TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER.

This 1880 cartoon suggested that Macdonald would sell the North West Territories to land speculators without consulting the inhabitants or concerning himself with their interests. Nolin and the other Metis were concerned as they did not hold title to their land.

and letters to Ottawa.

Nolin at last began to call for stronger measures. He worked with William Jackson to unite the Metis and white settlers in the Batoche-Prince Albert area. He was also one of a group that met at a local school on May 6, 1884. This group called on the English- and French-speaking people in the North West to send a delegation to Montana to see Louis Riel. They intended to ask him to return to Canada to help them present their demands to the federal government. Nolin was behind this decision. In a letter written on June 10, 1884, a church official wrote:

> Our poor Metis, pushed by a certain Charles Nolin, have made a terrible blunder. They have sent a deputation to Louis Riel to bring him back to act as their leader with a view to opposing the government.

When Riel accepted the invitation and moved to Batoche, he lived in Nolin's home for four months.

From his return in July 1884 until February 1885, Riel tried to bring about change by peaceful means. He drew up petitions and gave speeches throughout the area. During this time Nolin was the one who called for violence. A member of the North West Mounted Police, sent to the region to keep an eye on the situation, reported to Superintendent Crozier on September 26, 1884:

> Charles Nolin, another member and one of the most unreasonable, proposed that the Halfbreeds make certain demands on the government and if not complied with, they take up arms at once and commence killing every white man they can find and incite Indians to do the same.

Nolin may have been on the side of his people but he still had his own affairs to think of. When the government needed poles for a telegraph line from Prince Albert to Edmonton, Nolin put in a bid. In the end, Riel and the other Metis forced him to withdraw his tender. This example of Nolin's self-interest contrasted with Riel's refusal of a seat on the North West Council; the position would have paid him $1 000 a year, and Riel considered the offer a bribe.

Justice commands to take up arms

Louis "David" Riel. -Exovedi.

An excerpt from a letter from the Metis council to the English-speaking half-breeds in the Prince Albert area, March 21, 1885.

OPPOSITION TO RIEL

When Riel decided at last to switch his tactics and make a show of force, Nolin suddenly changed his tune. His wife had been very ill and she had made a miraculous recovery. Because of this the grateful Nolin promised priest Father André that he would take no part in any violence the Metis might plan. On March 5, 1885, Riel and his followers asked Nolin to sign a resolution they had drafted. It called on the people "to save our country from evil government by taking up arms if necessary." Nolin was in a predicament. He got out of it by calling for a novena (nine days of prayer) before a decision was made.

While Riel used the nine days to unite his forces, Nolin joined with the priests to oppose the use of violence. Riel had Nolin arrested and convicted of treason by his provisional government. Nolin was sentenced to be shot, and in order to save his life he was forced to support Riel. He was even made a member of the provisional government.

Nolin was also one of two men Riel sent to deliver a letter to Superintendent Crozier. In the letter Riel demanded that Crozier unconditionally surrender Fort Carlton or face "a war of extermination." Nolin delivered the message but did not hand over the letter. As soon as the first shots were fired at the Battle of Duck Lake on March 26, Nolin fled to Prince Albert. There he was treated as a rebel suspect and jailed for nearly two months.

Letter from Louis Riel to Superintendent Crozier, March 21, 1885.

St. Anthony, 21st March 1885
To Major Crozier, Commandant of the Police Force at Carlton and Battleford

Major: The councillors of the provisional government of the Saskatchewan have the honor to communicate to you the following conditions of surrender: You will be required to give up completely the situation which the Canadian Government have placed you in, at Carlton and Battleford, together with all government properties.

In case of acceptance, you and your men will be set free, on your parole [word] of honour to keep the peace. And those who will choose to leave the country will be furnished with teams and provisions to reach Qu'Appelle.

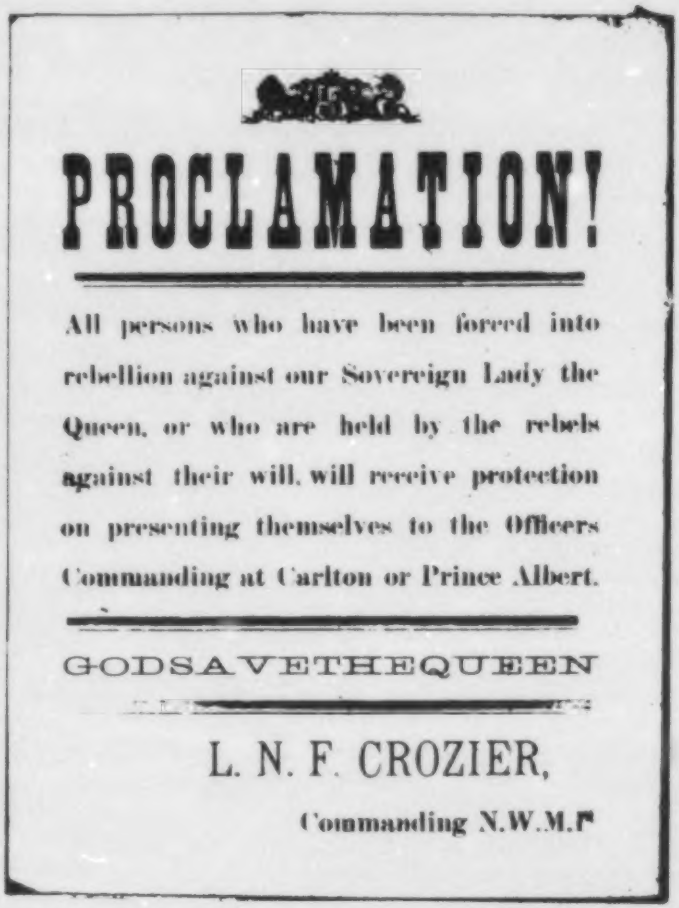
In case of non-acceptance, we intend to attack you, when tomorrow, the Lord's Day, is over; and to commence without delay a war of extermination upon all those who have shown themselves hostile to our rights.

Messrs. Charles and Maxime Lepine are the gentlemen with whom you will have to treat.

Major, we respect you. Let the cause of humanity be a consolation for you for the reverses which the governmental misconduct has brought upon you.

LOUIS 'DAVID' RIEL, Exovede

Rene Parenteau, chairman	Jean-Baptist Parenteau
Chas. Nolin	Pierre Henry
Gab. Dumont	Albert Delorme
Moïse Ouellette	Dam. Carrière
Albert Monkman	Maxime Lepine
Bte. Boyer	Bte. Boucher
Donald Ross	David Tourond
Amb. Jobin	Ph. Garnot, secretary



PROCLAMATION!

All persons who have been forced into rebellion against our Sovereign Lady the Queen, or who are held by the rebels against their will, will receive protection on presenting themselves to the Officers Commanding at Carlton or Prince Albert.

GODSAVETHEQUEEN

L. N. F. CROZIER,

Commanding N.W.M.P.

A proclamation issued by Superintendent Crozier soon after the outbreak of the rebellion.

A STAR WITNESS

Nolin was later the prosecution's star witness at the trial of Louis Riel, and he gave devastating testimony. He told of Riel's financial claim against the government and said that Riel spoke of leaving the country with the money; Riel would then raise an army to invade Canada. Regarding the February 24 meeting at Batoche, Nolin claimed that Riel himself had arranged for the people's show of support.

Riel was so upset by Nolin's testimony that he interrupted the court and asked to question the witness on his own behalf. There was much argument over this request and Riel was not allowed to do so. Riel's lawyers had chosen to argue insanity as their defence, and in the end they lost their case. It was Nolin's testimony, as much as anything, which led to Riel's conviction for high treason.

Charles Nolin (left) being sworn in as a witness at the trial of Louis Riel.

Evelina Barnabé

The woman Riel jilted

- Was born in L'Assomption, Quebec, about 1850.
- Met Louis Riel at her brother's home in Keeseville, New York, January 1874.
- Became secretly engaged to Riel, April 1878.
- Said goodbye to Riel when he left for St. Paul, Minnesota, December 1878.
- Wrote a letter to Riel which convinced him that he would never be able to provide for her, May 13, 1879.
- Wrote a letter to Riel's sister Henriette to obtain Riel's address and ask if Riel had really married another woman, May 14, 1882.
- Wrote Riel demanding to know why he had done so, October 15, 1882.
- Received a letter from Riel in which he explained why he had married Marguerite Monet, 1883.
- Returned with her mother to L'Assomption, Quebec, after the death of her brother, 1883.
- Married Jean Baptiste Goyette of Troy, New York, January 25, 1892.
- Died, date unknown.

Two women of the late 1800's.

THE BARNABÉS MEET RIEL

In the years following the confrontation of 1869-70, Louis Riel spent much of his time in exile in the United States. Because of his part in the execution of Thomas Scott, the Ontario government had offered $5 000 for his capture. Many Orangemen even wished to kill him. Although he was elected three times as a member of parliament for his county in Manitoba, he could not take his seat in Ottawa.

It was during these difficult years that Riel met Evelina Barnabé. Evelina lived in the quiet little French-Canadian lumbering community of Keeseville, New York, not far from Lake Champlain. She was educated in a convent and lived with her mother and her brother. Her brother was a parish priest in Keeseville and she played the organ in his church. In this secure and protected environment she grew up to be a sweet and gentle young woman.

Evelina's brother, Father Fabien Barnabé, met Louis Riel while Riel was staying in a home for priests in a nearby town. He invited Riel to stay as a guest at his home, and there Riel met Evelina and her mother. Evelina was attracted to the handsome and well-educated Riel, whose stories about life in the west must have seemed very exciting. Riel made a good impression on the rest of the family as well, and Father Barnabé later wrote him:

> . . . how lively is the memory of your visit. Scarcely a day passes by without your name receiving an honourable mention. We think of you, we talk about you, we feel for you as one would for a devoted friend, a loved brother. You are one of the family.

Louis Riel around the time of his stay in Keeseville.

NEWS OF THE AMNESTY

Riel was a frequent visitor to the Barnabé home from 1874 to 1876. It was while he was there in February 1875 that he heard of the amnesty or pardon he had been granted by Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie's government. As part of the agreement he would have to stay out of the country for five more years. He therefore could not pursue a political or a private career in Canada.

Riel now turned more and more to religion for comfort. Evelina no doubt learned from Riel of the letter that Bishop Bourget wrote him on July 14, 1875. In this letter Bourget said that Riel would soon be rewarded for all the sacrifices he had made; God would not abandon him in the dark hours of his life, for Riel had a mission to fulfil.

By January 1876 Riel was on the verge of a mental breakdown. He went to live with the Barnabés in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent it. He kept the whole house in a turmoil with his crying and shouting, and Evelina's brother finally sent for aid from some of Riel's relatives in Montreal. They too were unable to help, and Riel became a patient in mental institutions in Quebec. When he was released in 1878 he once again went to stay with the Barnabé family.

A SECRET ENGAGEMENT

Riel spent most of 1878 recuperating in Keeseville. He became secretly engaged to Evelina and tried very hard to find a job so they could marry. His education for the priesthood and his political experience were not very

Letter from Bishop Bourget to Louis Riel, July 14, 1875.

Monseigneur Bourget to Louis Riel
Montreal, July 14, 1875.

Dear Mr. Riel,

I received your letter yesterday and I was greatly touched, for that letter proves to me that you are animated by good motives and at the same time tormented in your mind by other inclinations or something which I do not understand, which makes you undecided in carrying out the duties imposed upon you by the obedience in which you live.

So I have the intimate conviction that you will receive in this world, and sooner than you think, the reward for all those mental and moral sacrifices you make, a thousand times more crushing than the sacrifices of material and visible life.

But God, who has always led you and assisted you until the present hour, will not abandon you in the dark hours of your life, for He has given you a mission which you must fulfil entirely.

By the Grace of God, you will persevere in the way which has been traced out for you. This is to say, you must not withhold anything you possess. You will desire above all things to know God and to show forth His glory. You will work unceasingly for the honour of your religion, the salvation of souls, and the good of society. And you will sanctify yourself in desiring heartily the sanctification of others.

As you asked me, I offered your letter to God, praying Him to confirm your noble aspirations, and that He will protect you to the end. May your faith increase in strength, in order that you may never hesitate in the face of the difficulties which life presents to us in all its aspects. . . .I bless you and remain your humble and obliging servant.

† Ig. Ev. of Montreal.

helpful to him and he had no luck.

Evelina's brother referred him to Bishop John Ireland of St. Paul, Minnesota, who wished to establish Catholic colonies in the west. When Bishop Ireland failed to employ him he went further west. He wrote Evelina about his plans to form a great confederacy of the Indian tribes and Metis living in Montana and the Canadian North West. He hoped this union would be powerful enough to establish an independent native republic. Riel was in a position to negotiate with these groups in the winter of 1879-80 as most of them were in Montana hunting the last great herd of buffalo.

Evelina wrote Riel many letters during his absence and made brave attempts to sound strong enough to join him. When she learned of his plan to unite the natives she told him that she would like to fight by his side in overthrowing the English. In uncharacteristically tough terms she urged him: ". . . do not hold back from massacres until no more of that infamous race [Orangemen] remains in your country." The letters also revealed her doubts. She saw herself as a humble and not very brave woman, and was worried that she would not be suited to the high position she would have to hold if he were successful. Riel's attempts at forming a native union ended in failure and he had to make a meagre living as a trader.

JILTED BY RIEL

When Riel wrote to Evelina about coming to marry her she told him to wait until he could provide her with a home — a home, no doubt, like her home in Keeseville. Few such homes existed in the west at that time and he had little hope of ever making enough money to afford one. He also knew that she was not strong enough to cope with the hardships of frontier life. Marriage to Evelina was an impossible dream, and in 1879 Riel stopped writing her. He set out for the new Metis frontier in Montana, and in 1881 he married an illiterate Metis woman, Marguerite Monet.

Meanwhile, Evelina remained faithful to Riel and did not learn that she had been jilted until 1882, when she read of his marriage in a newspaper. She wrote a polite letter to Riel's sister Henriette to confirm the newspaper report and to ask for Riel's address. In it she hinted at the bitterness she felt. She said that her family often thought of Riel even if he had forgotten them. She saved her strongest words for Riel when she wrote him on October 15, 1882:

> Sir; It will soon be five years since you left your friends in Keeseville, saying good-bye after a long absence.
>
> Even if you suddenly stopped writing, I never lost hope, even if it were evident that you were losing all memories of those whom you loved.
>
> Not too long ago, I read in the papers that you had married Miss Monet . . . I could not believe my eyes . . . it is incredible. Could you be so shameful? . . . I would like to know how you were able to marry this person. If you do not do this [write her] you will bring God's punishment upon yourself, for having destroyed forever the future of one who has only one regret if such is the case, of having known and loved you.

Riel must have been torn with feelings of guilt when he read this letter. The Barnabé family had been generous with their love and kindness at the very times in his life when he needed it the most, and their house in Keeseville had been a second home to him. Evelina herself had likely

been his greatest love. In his reply Riel referred to the letter in which Evelina told him she wanted a home. He explained that he could not give her a home and comforts equal to those provided by her brother. After his years of frustration and failure he simply may not have had the strength in 1880 to admit this to her. He even stopped writing his own family about the same time.

Evelina was wrong when she said he had forgotten her. In one of the letters she wrote him after he left for the American west she said:

> I often go to sit under the lilacs, which are about to bloom. I hasten to gather a few blossoms to give you. I am carried back to that time when we were so happy, both of us seated on the same bench.

It is said that the pressed blossoms from her letter were found in his inside pocket on the day he was executed in 1885.

Marguerite Monet Riel

Wife of Louis Riel

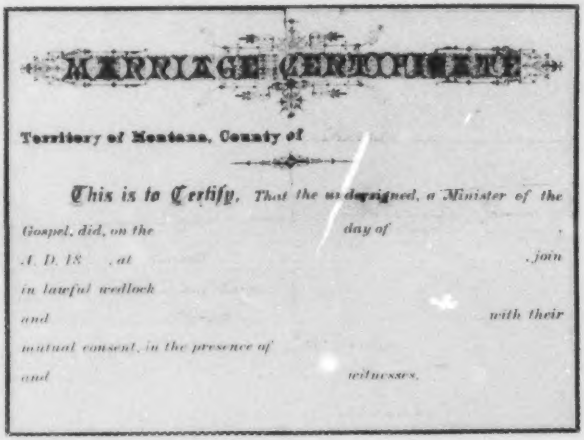
- Was born in St. François, Quebec, 1861.
- Father followed the buffalo south from Fort Ellice, Manitoba, to a camp near Carroll, Montana.
- Met Louis Riel on one of his hunting expeditions at Fort Benton, Montana, 1880 or 1881.
- Married Louis Riel without a priest, April 28, 1881; marriage solemnized, March 9, 1882.
- Left for Canada with Riel and their two young children, June 10, 1884.
- Husband surrendered following the Battle of Batoche, May 15, 1885.
- Went with Riel's brother Joseph to St. Vital, Manitoba, June 1885.
- Visited Riel in prison at Regina, September 1885.
- Husband hanged, November 16, 1885.
- Attended his funeral at St. Boniface with their children, December 12, 1885.
- Died of tuberculosis, May 24, 1886.

Marguerite Monet Riel.

RIEL'S THIRD LOVE

Marguerite Monet was the third and last love in Louis Riel's life. The first woman he was engaged to was a young Montreal girl whose parents forbade the marriage because of Riel's poverty and his Metis origins; the second was Evelina Barnabe of Keeseville, New York, whom he felt he could not support; and the third was Marguerite Monet, a Metis woman who lived in Montana. She was the woman he married.

In his diary for 1884 Riel recorded the following prayer: "I, Louis 'David' Riel, ask to find in Marguerite Monet . . . a sincere, honest, obedient, faithful, chaste and holy spouse who loves me." This was a perfect description of his wife.



MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE

Territory of Montana, County of

This is to Certify, That the undersigned, a Minister of the Gospel, did, on the day of A. D. 18 , at , join in lawful wedlock and with their mutual consent, in the presence of and witnesses.

The marriage certificate of Louis Riel and Marguerite Monet, dated March 9, 1882, at Carroll, Montana.

She was a gentle, attractive and self-sacrificing woman and was devoted to him. An American who met the Riels in Montana stated that it was "touching to observe the courtly tenderness with which he presented her."

MARRIED LIFE

Marguerite Riel's married life was a difficult one. Her husband's mind was always on religion or politics, and he always put the needs of his people ahead of the needs of his family. He had trouble getting a permanent job, and he tried and failed to make a living as a hunter, trader, interpreter, woodcutter and shepherd.

Louis Riel's mission in life was to help the Metis people, and in the early 1880's they were in desperate need of help. Their old way of life had ended, and when they were left without work or food they turned to alcohol for solace. Riel tried to stop the sale of liquor to the Metis but his efforts failed. He then became involved in politics. By persuading the Metis to vote, he hoped to press the government to improve conditions. Unfortunately, he supported the losing party and was arrested for encouraging unqualified residents to vote. When his case was dismissed, Riel settled down as a teacher in a Jesuit mission school for Metis at St. Peter's, Montana. His salary as a school teacher was small, but for the first time in her marriage Marguerite had some financial security.

BEST COPY AVA

The mission at St. Peter's, Montana, where Riel taught school.

A DELEGATION ARRIVES

Marguerite Riel's life was changed on June 4, 1884, when four men arrived from the Batoche-Prince Albert region of Canada. They had come to ask Riel to return to Canada to help the settlers there fight for their rights. Riel had successfully helped the people in the Red River valley gain concessions from Ottawa in 1870, and in 1884 he was needed in the west.

The delegates were very impressed by their visit to the Riel home and later reported:

> Usually, when visitors enter the dwelling of a very poor man they experience a rather painful feeling, but on entering M. Riel's house, our impression was different. The humble condition of his home reminded us of the times in years past when he had the chance to enrich himself and indeed to make a considerable fortune; it also reminded us how far, despite everything, he was strengthened by confidence in his nation. We know how he worked for Manitoba and how he struggled on behalf of everyone in the Northwest, and having seen how little he had worked for his own benefit, we have returned after a long journey of almost fourteen hundred miles [2240 kilometres], with double the confidence we had in him when we left to seek him out in a strange land.

Part of Marguerite's love for Louis may have been due to this dedication to their people.

RETURN TO CANADA

Riel agreed to return to Canada with the group, and his wife quietly began packing and preparing their little son and infant daughter for the trip. When they arrived in Canada she was astounded by the welcome they received. In St. Peter's, Montana, her husband was a quiet school teacher with some influence among the local Metis; in the Saskatchewan valley he was their obvious leader. The family was mobbed at Fish Creek and Batoche, and Riel spoke to enthusiastic groups of people throughout the area. Marguerite was proud of her husband as he went about his work. Eventually he managed to incorporate the settlers' grievances into a petition to be sent to Ottawa. As soon as the government satisfied the Metis claims and his own, the family would return to Montana. Riel's mission was almost complete.

Unfortunately, the government paid little attention to the petition and ignored Riel's claims. The people demanded that Riel stay and increase his efforts to gain

Ottawa's attention. Events got out of hand and rebellion broke out.

The Metis were defeated at Batoche on May 12, 1885, and the next day Riel moved his family to the home of his faithful friend Moïse Ouellette on the other side of the South Saskatchewan River. He himself surrendered two days later. While he waited in jail for his trial and execution, Marguerite was left penniless to cope with their two children. After several weeks one of Riel's brothers arrived from St. Boniface to take her and the children to his home.

Louis Riel exercising outside his Regina jail. Marguerite Riel visited her husband during his imprisonment here.

A FAREWELL IN PRISON

Marguerite Riel visited her husband in prison in Regina in September 1885, shortly before the first date set for his execution. One of his prison guards has left us with this description of her:

> Riel's wife was a very dark Cree woman. [She was, in fact, a Metis.] She possessed all the characteristics of the ideal Indian. She was extremely proud, gentle and self-sacrificing. The day she called to see her husband for the last time she had her children with her. The eldest son . . . began to cry, at the sight of his father. The mother reminded the boy he was being observed by a white policeman. Immediately the lad ceased crying.
>
> The wife talked earnestly with Riel for two hours in Cree dialect, and when she rose to go the guard turned his back for a few moments. She fully appreciated his delicacy and as she passed out extended her hand and said in good English, "You are very kind. I thank you."

Riel was very fond of his wife. On the morning of his death he bundled together a few of his writings and valuables to be sent to her. Shortly before he went to the scaffold he told the guard that his only regret was in leaving his wife and children unprovided for. He had even tried to persuade his jailor to allow him to be photographed in his cell, with ball and chain, to raise money for them.

The strain of these months proved too much for Marguerite Riel. In October she gave birth to her third child, a boy who lived only a few hours. After her husband's execution in November she lost the will to live, and slowly gave in to tuberculosis. She died in May 1886.

Father Alexis André

A Prince Albert priest

Father Alexis André (back row, second from right) in Regina. Chief Poundmaker is seated in front of André and Chief Big Bear in the front row (second from left).

- Was born in Quimper, France, July 6, 1833.
- Was ordained a priest at Marseilles, July 1861.
- Served at missions in North Dakota and Manitoba.
- Taught at the St. Boniface College, 1864-65.
- Founded and worked at a number of missions in the Saskatchewan District, 1871-86.
- Encouraged Gabriel Dumont to organize a local government council at St. Laurent, 1873.
- Wrote Sir John A. Macdonald and Lieutenant-Governor Edgar Dewdney about Metis grievances, 1883-84,
- Opposed Riel's formation of a provisional government and kept Macdonald informed of Metis activities during March 1885.
- Testified at the trial of Louis Riel; claimed Riel was insane, July 30, 1885.
- Spent the night before Riel's execution in prayer with him and attended him at his execution on November 16, 1885.
- Arranged for the shipment of Riel's body to St. Boniface for burial, November 1885.
- Moved to Calgary in 1886 and died there on January 10, 1893.

A PRIEST IN THE NORTH WEST

Father André was well suited to missionary work in the North West. He had the religious devotion needed to spend years in isolated settlements and the toughness of character demanded by frontier life. His beard was untidy, his robes often dirty, and his manners abrupt. As one of his parishioners reported: "He upbraids, threatens, and even strikes us but he does well; that is what we need, for we are very wicked."

By the early 1880's Father André had lived in the North West for over twenty years. He understood the Metis grievances and had written letters to the government himself explaining their desire to own their river front lots. His letters failed, like their many petitions, to stir the government into action. In spite of this he was not happy when they decided to ask Louis Riel to return to Canada.

André knew that Riel had helped his people in their conflict with the Canadian government in 1869-70, but he also knew that times had changed. The government now had undisputed control of the North West, and any confrontation would be futile. The North West Mounted Police would at once oppose any uprising, and troops could be sent to the west on the nearly completed Canadian Pacific Railway. Riel himself had been out of the country for many years. All in all, André and the other priests felt that they were in a better position than Riel to lead the Metis.

Despite his misgivings, Father André at first supported Riel. He was impressed by the way Riel united the people in the Prince Albert - Batoche region and drew up his petition. Once Riel had been back for several months, though, André noticed that he had changed.

THE PRIESTS BECOME CONCERNED

Riel had always been deeply religious but his views were no longer those of the Roman Catholic Church. He wished, for example, to change the Lord's Day to Saturday, give Christian names to the days of the week, and see a French-Canadian archbishop as "pope of the new world." He also believed that he had a God-given mission to help his people. The Metis believed that Riel was a prophet, but the priests felt that he had a bad influence on them. As his popularity grew, André and the other priests began to withdraw their support. Conflicts arose when Riel challenged the priests about their change in attitude. These at last led the priests to believe that Riel was insane. André later testified to this effect at Riel's trial.

Once Riel's petition had been sent to Ottawa, Father André tried to get him out of the country. He felt that if Riel's own claim against the government were settled, Riel might be willing to leave. He therefore set up a meeting with Riel and D. H. MacDowall, the local member of the territorial council. According to André and MacDowall, Riel would have accepted as little as $5 000. He would also try to persuade his [illegible]wers to accept any land settlement the government might make. Sir John A. Macdonald, though, refused to negotiate.

When politics were involved, Father André did not hesitate to make unpopular decisions that he felt would help his people in the end. One such moment of decision

came on March 2, 1885, when Riel visited him in Prince Albert. Riel demanded that André give him permission to proclaim a provisional government, but André refused to do so. When Riel lost his temper the priest asked him to leave his home.

ANDRÉ WORKS AGAINST RIEL

André now began to work actively against Riel. In a last-minute attempt to prevent a rebellion, he tried to rally the moderate Metis around Riel's cousin Charles Nolin. Nolin got Riel to agree to a nine-day period of prayer before stronger action was taken.

The priests used this delay to remind the Metis of their obligations to the church and to the government. One of the priests preached these views in a sermon at St. Laurent on March 15. He even threatened to withhold the sacraments from any Metis who should support an armed rising. Riel interrupted this sermon to condemn the church, and four days later he proclaimed his provisional government.

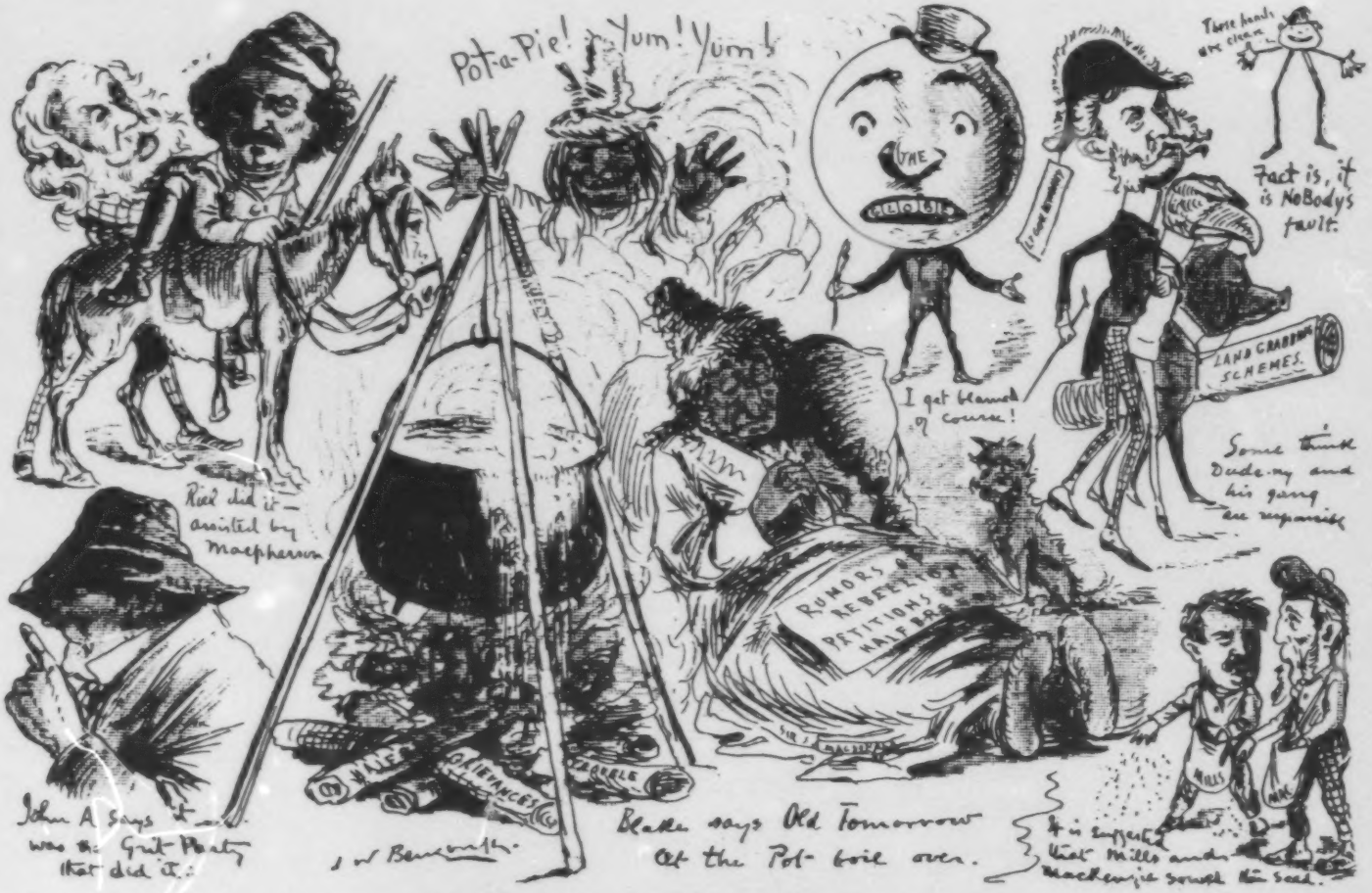
Soon after the rebellion broke out, Riel ordered the priests and nuns in the Batoche area to move to the church of St. Antoine de Padua. Father André remained at Prince Albert. During the weeks of fighting he kept the government well-informed of Riel's movements. Gabriel Dumont later claimed that the priests were largely to blame for the Metis' defeat.

During the rebellion André persuaded Superintendent Crozier to proclaim that any Metis or half-breeds who surrendered to the Mounted Police would be protected. Charles Nolin surrendered in Prince Albert on March 26, but was imprisoned for two months without even being charged. André was bitter about this injustice. He later claimed that Riel discouraged others from deserting by pointing out Nolin's fate.

ANDRÉ BLAMES RIEL

When the rebellion was over André placed the full blame for it on Riel. In a letter he wrote to the Winnipeg *Daily Free Press* on June 22, he claimed that the priests had seen at once "what ambitious and criminal projects were lurking in that perverted heart." The Metis were "a simple and unsuspicious people, who could not conceive that a man so holy in appearance and so much given to prayer, was capable of deceiving them." He said that the priests had done everything they could to warn the people of the danger of following such a man.

Once Riel was defeated, André worked hard on behalf of his supporters. On August 13, 1885, he made a statement in Regina in favour of the Metis who had been imprisoned. In supporting them he was just as eloquent as he had been earlier in condemning Riel. Except for Gabriel Dumont and two others, he said, not one of the half-breeds had the least idea that a rebellion was about to take place until it was too late to escape. They were peaceful, loyal, and hard-working people who knew little of politics. They had been "misled by one who thoroughly knew their weak minds and their hearts," and they had suffered greatly. André summed up his feelings by quoting one of the government soldiers wounded in the Battle of Duck Lake:


Pot-a-Pie! Yum! Yum!
THE ABOUL
I get blamed of course!
There heads are clean...
Fact is, it is NoBody's fault.
LAND GRABBING SCHEMES.
Some think Dude-my and his gang are responsible
Riel did it — assisted by Macpherson
John A says it was the Grit Party that did it.
RUMORS OF REBELLION PETITIONS HALF BREED
Blake says Old Tomorrow Of the Pot- boil over.
It is expected that Mills and Mackenzie scratch the head.

A cartoon published in April 1885.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

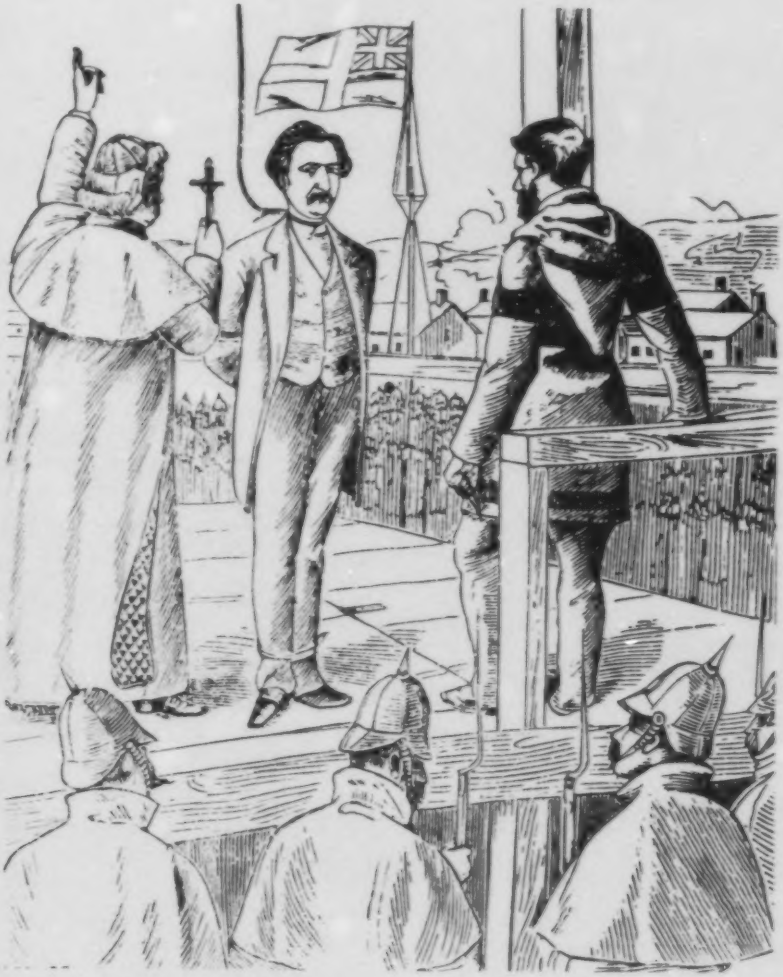
Louis Riel's council beside the Regina courthouse at the time of their trials in 1885. André had little sympathy for Riel but he did everything he could to help the other Metis prisoners.

> Although I am one of the greatest sufferers by this terrible rebellion, and will limp through life on one leg, yet I say from my soul, hang Riel and Dumont, but forgive all the others. They are innocent of intentional crime, and were misled by that soulless rascal Riel. I forgive them from my heart.

PRISON CHAPLAIN TO RIEL

In spite of the bitterness that had come between them, André and Riel eventually became reconciled. While Riel was in prison he asked André to stay in Regina as his chaplain. André did, and fought hard to get Riel to give up his strange beliefs. In the end Riel returned to the Roman Catholic faith.

During these months André dreaded the day he would have to accompany Riel to the scaffold. At last it came. As they walked up the steps to the gallows it was André, strong as he was, who was reduced to tears, and Riel who called on André to be courageous. André later reported to Archbishop Taché that Riel died a saint. As Riel was executed he held a small statue of St. Joseph which André had given him. The broken statue can be seen today in the St. Boniface museum, near the churchyard where Riel is buried.



André reciting the Lord's prayer at the execution of Louis Riel, November 16, 1885.

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IDEAS FOR PROJECTS

1. You are Marguerite Monet Riel and you have managed to get a thirty minute appointment with Sir John A. Macdonald. Write an imaginary conversation with the prime minister in which you make a plea for your husband's life.
2. Write a chapter for an historical novel about the last meeting between Louis Riel and his wife in his prison cell in Regina before his execution.
3. Prepare for a press conference which might have been held on November 17, 1885. Four students should role play the people mentioned in this chapter and two should role play correspondents representing important newspapers or magazines.
4. Write epitaphs for the gravestones of each of the people in this chapter.
5. Was Louis Riel sane or insane? Two good primary sources to consult are *The Diaries of Louis Riel*, edited by Thomas Flanagan, and *The Queen v Louis Riel*, with an introduction by Desmond Morton (pp. 96-98, 203-04, 232-33, 239-61, 269-74, 283-325, and 350-91). A good secondary source is *Louis 'David' Riel*, also by Thomas Flanagan. Read one or more of these books and write an essay giving your views on Riel's sanity.
6. Use the following quotations as inspiration for term reports or class discussions:

"It is difficult to know whether Louis loved Evelina too much or too little."

Mary V. Jordan

"I am certain that a divine force is guiding me."

Louis Riel

"Personal ambition was not the controlling motive of Louis Riel . . . there was no taint of self-seeking in his efforts for freedom, justice and humanity."

Alex. C. Botkin

"In 1885, after the defeat at Batoche, he could have yielded to his people's entreaties and gone to the United States, but he preferred to give himself up and sacrifice his life for the welfare of his people. Riel was a model of self-denial, sacrifice and devotion."

Auguste Trémaudan

"Riel decided [in 1885] to follow the tactics which he had employed in 1869 and 1870 . . . It was the scheme of a mad man, but Riel was no longer sane."

George F. G. Stanley

"Riel was the noblest person I ever knew."

Father Alexis André

"The North-West Rebellion was as much a religious movement as a political uprising; Riel was a prophet in arms."

Thomas Flanagan

"After careful and continuous examination of him [Riel] . . . I cannot escape the conviction, that except upon certain questions of a purely religious and private nature . . . he is perfectly sane and accountable for his actions."

Augustus L. Jukes

"Nature had endowed him [Louis Riel] with many brilliant qualities but nature had denied him that supreme quality without which all other qualities, however brilliant, are of no avail. Nature had denied him a well-balanced mind."

Wilfred Laurier

7. The Trial Of Louis Riel

THE TRIAL BEGINS

On July 20, 1885, Louis Riel was formally charged with high treason under the 400 year old Treason Act. This act was a British law which defined high treason as levying war against the monarch in his realm. It was claimed that Riel "most wickedly, maliciously and traitorously did levy and make war against our said Lady the Queen" at Duck Lake, Fish Creek and Batoche. Riel pleaded not guilty to the charge.

Riel's lawyers were granted a week's delay so that they could send for several witnesses from eastern Canada, and the trial resumed on July 28. Five of the best lawyers in the country represented the Crown and another four acted for the defence.

In his opening remarks one of the Crown council outlined the strategy of the Crown. It was as follows: to show that Riel had been the leader of the Metis; to exhibit a note he had sent to Superintendent Crozier demanding the surrender of Fort Carlton; to show that he was willing to return to Montana if he were paid enough by Ottawa; to establish that his only object was to obtain money or gratify his desire for power; and to prove that the rebellion was "not a matter brought about by any wrongs and grievances that have existed, so much as a matter brought about by the personal ambition and vanity of the man on trial."

The defence strategy became apparent when Riel's lawyers cross-examined the Crown's witnesses and examined their own. Drawing out details of Riel's strange ideas and his sudden changes in mood, they laid the groundwork for a plea of insanity. They also brought out the fact that many of the white settlers, as well as the Metis and Indians, had grievances with Ottawa. By explaining the reasons for the people's discontent, the defence hoped to put the blame for the uprising on the government. The Crown lawyers objected to this line of argument, pointing out that the government was not on trial. They also called several rebuttal witnesses who testified that Riel was sane.

APPEALS TO THE JURY

The testimony ended on July 31. Mr. Fitzpatrick summarized the case for the defence and ended his speech with an eloquent appeal to the jury: "I know . . . that you shall not weave the cord that shall hang and hang him high in the face of all the world, a poor confused lunatic; a victim, gentlemen, of oppression or the victim of fanaticism." Riel then weakened the defence's case with a long speech. In it he denied his counsel's claims that he was insane and sought to justify his actions for the last sixteen years. Mr. Robinson summed up for the Crown. He reviewed the evidence to show that the rebellion was "clearly, calmly, and deliberately opened and carried out" by a man who had lived among the Metis for many months without any unsoundness of mind apparently being discovered. Justice Richardson then gave his instructions to the jury. At 2 p.m. on August 1 the jury retired and court was recessed.

The trial of Louis Riel.

THE VERDICT

At 3:15 p.m. the six man jury returned from their hour-long deliberation. Riel was pronounced guilty of high treason. The foreman also announced that the jury wished to recommend the prisoner to the mercy of the Crown. As one member of the jury later explained, the additional clause "expressed the serious desire of every one of the six of us." The lawyers for both the Crown and the defence had impressed the jury deeply.

At this point Riel made another long speech justifying his actions and thanking the jury for finding him sane. Justice Richardson then delivered his sentence. Riel was to be hanged by the neck until he was dead for committing a crime "the most pernicious and greatest that man can commit." Riel's lawyers' appealed to the Queen's Bench of Manitoba and then to the Privy Council in London, but both appeals failed. He was executed on November 16, 1885.

From a legal point of view, justice had apparently been served. From a political and moral point of view, many people agreed with the jury's recommendation of mercy. The people living in the North West at the time of the rebellion were faced with many problems, and one of the jury members later stated: "Had the Government done their duty and redressed the grievances of the half-breeds of Saskatchewan . . . there never would have been a second Riel Rebellion, and consequently no prisoner to try and condemn."

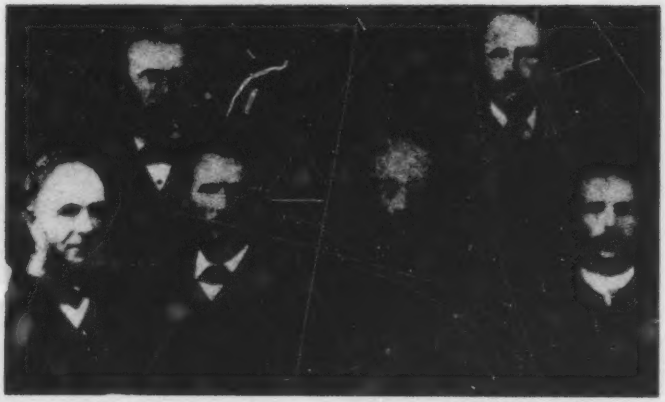
If Macdonald thought that the execution of Louis Riel would end the controversy, he was greatly mistaken. Newspapers and politicians alike, especially those in Quebec, rushed to his defence. They were upset both by the attempts of the more extreme English groups to place the blame for the rebellion entirely on Riel, and by the way the government had handled his trial.

DID RIEL RECEIVE A FAIR TRIAL?

There were several aspects of Riel's trial which left many people at the time (and more since) feeling that justice had not been done. First, Stipendiary Magistrate Hugh Richardson was not a suitable choice to hear such an important case. He was a low ranking judicial official who normally tried liquor offences or other small crimes in the North West Territories. He was appointed by the government and continued in office at its pleasure, while a higher ranking member of the judiciary would have been independent of the government. If Riel had been tried in Manitoba, the case would have been heard by a superior court judge. In addition, Richardson had lost over $1 000 worth of cattle in the uprising, and was known to be prejudiced against the Metis and Indians.

RIEL'S JURY

Judge Richardson also selected the jury panel, or group from which the jury members would be chosen. We do not know how he picked the panel of thirty-six men, but we do know that the men he selected all lived along the Canadian Pacific Railway. This meant that most of them were recent immigrants to the west. Their sympathies therefore tended



Louis Riel's jury.

to lie with settlers from eastern Canada and not with the Metis, half-breeds and Indians or the dissatisfied white settlers. Only one of the group was French-speaking, and an accident prevented him from appearing for jury selection. There was also only one Roman Catholic on the list. When his name was drawn it was challenged by the prosecuting attorney and the objection was upheld by Richardson. As a result of all this, the jurors finally picked were all Protestants of British stock, none of whom was familiar with the French language.

Further, Riel was tried by a jury of only six rather than the jury of twelve normally associated with capital crimes A six-man jury would have been reasonable in such a sparsely populated part of Canada for a lesser crime, but it was hardly right for a trial involving a major rebellion and treason. The verdict in a criminal trial must be unanimous, and if there had been twelve jurors instead of only six, there would have been a greater chance that one juror would have found the accused innocent. The government had in fact first planned to try Riel in Winnipeg. When it was realized that under Manitoba law he would be entitled to a twelve-man jury, half French-speaking, the trial was moved to Regina where territorial law would apply.

WITNESSES FOR THE DEFENCE

When it came to calling witnesses for his own defence, Riel had even worse luck. Out of the eight he felt were essential to his case, the Crown provided only two. Three of the others, including Gabriel Dumont, were living as fugitives in the United States. The court refused to grant them special immunity to come to Regina to testify on Riel's behalf. Riel also wanted the deputy ministers of the interior and of Indian affairs to appear, but the Crown refused to summon them. Riel hoped that their testimony would show that he had been forced to act as he had because Macdonald had ignored the Metis grievances.

Other witnesses who could have been questioned at Riel's trial were never called; among these were Indians such as Chief Poundmaker and Chief Big Bear, and Metis prisoners in jail in Regina. In part, this was due to Riel's lawyers' decision not to challenge the charge of treason but to argue that he should be acquitted on the grounds of insanity. The Crown lawyers' decision to use only two Metis witnesses and no Indian witnesses is also strange.

Another factor made it difficult for Riel to obtain a fair trial. This was the government's decision to deny his lawyers access to government documents and to the

A RIEL UGLY POSITION.

A cartoon demonstrating the dilemma in which Sir John A. Macdonald found himself after Riel's trial.

documents taken from him at Batoche. The deputy ministers of the interior and of Indian affairs could have produced many documents and petitions sent by the Metis to the government. The government would have found this information embarrassing and did not want it disclosed. It is less clear why Riel was denied access to the documents seized by Major-General Middleton at Batoche. The Crown lawyers were allowed access to these and presented many as evidence at the trial.

One final aspect of the trial, which at the present time might strike people as unusual, was the absence of women as participants. As many women were directly or indirectly involved in the rebellion, their inclusion as witnesses might have made a difference to the outcome of the trial. They were not considered for jury duty because the law stated that jurors had to be men.

WAS RIEL GUILTY?

It is too late to make amends for the questionable aspects of Riel's trial and execution. Nonetheless, it is interesting to re-examine the events of the time and make up one's own mind as to his guilt or innocence. Was Riel guilty of treason in 1885? Should he have been executed? Should he now be pardoned? You have looked at the problems of the time and at the dramatic events of 1885 as they affected many individuals. Some of these people were present as witnesses at the original trial but many were not. It is hoped that this more balanced picture of Riel and the rebellion will help you in reaching a decision of your own about Riel.

JUSTICE STILL UNSATISFIED.

Sir John. — Well, madam, Riel is gone; I hope you are quite satisfied.
Justice. — Not quite; you have hanged the EFFECT of the Rebellion; now I want to find and punish the CAUSE.

A cartoon which appeared after Riel's execution.

IDEAS FOR PROJECTS

1. Prepare a "scales of justice" pinboard display with evidence for and against the charge of high treason against Riel.
2. According to some newspaper accounts, Gabriel Dumont planned to engineer the escape of Louis Riel from his prison cell in Regina. Imagine that you have found Dumont's plans, and prepare a copy of them.
3. Stage a mock cabinet discussion which might have been held the day before Riel's execution.
4. You are a television commentator doing live coverage of the public's reaction to the execution of Louis Riel. Have a team of reporters ready to interview the public as soon as the news of his death reaches them. Start with a reporter interviewing the hangman and Father André on the scaffold in Regina, then interview Riel's wife in St. Boniface, Gabriel Dumont in Lewiston, Montana, Sir John A. Macdonald in Ottawa, and Liberal member of parliament Wilfred Laurier in Montreal. Have your reporters and interviewers prepare their questions and answers ahead of time. Videotape the interviews and show them to the class.
5. The Metis of Canada want the federal government to grant Riel a posthumous pardon for his actions in 1885. (A posthumous pardon is one granted after death.) Conduct a poll among your classmates and the general public, and interpret the results. If you think your findings are significant you might like to forward them to the prime minister or leaders of the opposition parties. Let the class know their response.
6. Use the following quotations as inspiration for term reports, class discussions or political cartoons:

"Witness after witness — white settlers, loyal half-breeds, Batoche prisoners, Indian traders, military commanders, Mounted Policemen, missionaries, and medical experts — tell their stories that were so many strands in the rope that was gradually being woven for the prisoner's final undoing. The evidence was in effect a verbal history of both rebellions."

Frank Yeigh

"We [the jury] tried Louis Riel for treason but he was hung for the murder of Thomas Scott."

Edwin Brooks

"Had there been no neglect there would have been no rebellion. If no rebellion, then no arrest. If no arrest, no trial. If no trial, then no condemnation. If no condemnation, then no execution. They therefore who are responsible for the first are responsible for every link in that fatal chain."

Edward Blake

"Since I have a mission, I cannot fulfil my mission as long as I am looked upon as an insane being."

Louis Riel

"No trial in Canadian history has ever excited more interest or stirred up more racial bitterness."

Edward McCourt

"Louis Riel's trial was a judicial mockery of which any free nation ought to be ashamed.

Mr. Gray, M.P.

"Anyone who tries to argue seriously that the trial of Riel was unfair is simply trying to change the facts of history."

Desmond Morton

Epilogue

The Rebellion of 1885 cost the lives of over eighty people. Over 145 others were wounded, and the lives of many people on both sides of the conflict were disrupted. Many homes and several forts were damaged or destroyed and much personal property was lost. The cost to the Canadian taxpayer was over $5 000 000.

It was these immediate results of the three month conflict which concerned most people at the time of Louis Riel's trial in the summer of 1885. The rebellion, though, would quickly assume a far greater importance in our history.

To begin with, Sir John A. Macdonald's decision to ignore Quebec's demands for leniency and allow Riel's execution re-opened the rift between English and French Canada. At the time of Confederation in 1867 many people in Quebec had been opposed to becoming a part of Canada. They had feared that the federal government would favour English Canada at their expense, and Riel's execution seemed to justify their fears. On November 22, 1885, a giant protest rally was held in Montreal. The dreams of some politicians that the campaign to put down the rebellion would unify Canada were shattered. The Riel Rebellion thus joins other major events in Canadian history — the Battle of Quebec in 1759, the Rebellions of 1837, and the conscription crisis of 1917 — which have divided English- and French-speaking Canadians and encouraged the desire of many French Canadians for their own nation.

A number of political careers were also affected by the execution of Louis Riel. Wilfred Laurier was one of many politicians who spoke at the Montreal rally. Laurier told

A cartoon showing the reaction of the people of Quebec to the execution of Louis Riel.

the angry crowd: "Had I been born on the banks of the Saskatchewan, I would myself have shouldered a musket to fight against the neglect of governments and the shameless greed of speculators." His speech endeared him to many French Canadians. He eventually assumed the leadership of the Liberal party, and became prime minister in 1896.

In contrast, the Conservative party declined in Quebec as a result of Macdonald's action. Macdonald knew that a national party in Canada must have a secure base in Quebec, and this knowledge made him one of our greatest politicians. In 1885 he ignored this fact, and it was many years before his party regained its credibility there.

The Rebellion of 1885 brought to a head the feelings of discontent in western Canada. Westerners knew that the taxpayers in eastern Canada had assumed a huge financial burden to pay for the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway. In spite of this they resented the monopoly of the railway and the high cost of bringing in Canadian manufactured goods. They also resented being treated as a colony without parliamentary representation, responsible government or provincial status. Although they were able to elect some of the members of the North West Council, the government appointed the rest and the lieutenant-governor had most of the power. Most of the settlers in the North West in the 1880's had come from Ontario, and they could not understand why their political rights had ended at the Manitoba border.

The Rebellion of 1885 shocked the federal government into granting federal representation to the North West Territories in 1886. Responsible government was not

Following the execution of Riel, Sir John A. Macdonald was put on "trial" by parliament.

granted until 1897 and provincial status was not achieved until 1905. Provincial control over natural resources was not given Alberta and Saskatchewan until 1930. While most of the white settlers on the prairies condemned Riel's tactics in 1885, they could sympathize with his problems in getting Ottawa to pay attention to western grievances. Almost 100 years after Riel's execution, western Canadians were again demanding constitutional change to give them a stronger voice in the federal government. A few were even advocating western separation.

The problems of the Indian and Metis people also continued to grow during the years after the rebellion. Instead of gaining a voice in the new government of the west, both groups were shunted aside as the prairies were settled. Even today they come at the bottom of the list in terms of housing, schooling and employment. With other low-income groups, they lead in terms of suicide, infant mortality and imprisonment. Many native organizations are working to improve their lot. This is especially true in northern Canada, where the search for oil, hydroelectric power and other natural resources has made the issue of land claims more urgent.

If Louis Riel were alive today he would not be pleased with the lasting effects of the Rebellion of 1885. He did not want to weaken the bonds between Quebec and English Canada or between the west and the east; he did want to negotiate provincial status for the North West Territories and to protect the rights of the Metis, Indian and white people of the North West. Canadians today must still cope with some of the problems he attempted to solve in 1884-85.

Riel was condemned as a traitor in 1885, but history has judged him less harshly. The federal government has issued a stamp in his honour, and the governments of Manitoba and Saskatchewan have erected monuments to him on the grounds of their legislative buildings. At the unveiling of the monument to Riel in Regina, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau spoke of this change in attitude:

> Eighty-three years ago in the Mounted Police barracks in Regina, Louis Riel awaited execution as a convicted traitor. This afternoon we are assembled to unveil a monument in his honour. No man in Canadian history suffered as many reversals of fortune during his life. He was, in turn, unofficial leader of his people, president of a provisional government, founder of the province of Manitoba, fugitive in exile, member of Parliament, outlaw, leader of another provisional government, and prisoner. Yet it may be that none of the twists and turns in his tragic biography will be as important to the history of this country as the reversal of official and public opinion which this monument symbolizes.

Although a number of years have passed since these words were spoken, Riel is still a traitor in the eyes of the law. Is his case worthy of reconsideration? You have heard the evidence and it is up to you to decide.

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Abbreviations: AM, Archives of Manitoba; BHP, Battleford Historic Park; GA, Glenbow-Alberta Institute; HSSM, Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba; MA, Manitoba Archives; MHS, Montana Historical Society; PAA, Public Archives of Alberta; PAC, Public Archives of Canada; PAHS, Prince Albert Historical Society; RCMP, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Ottawa; ROM, Royal Ontario Museum; SAB, Saskatchewan Archives Board.

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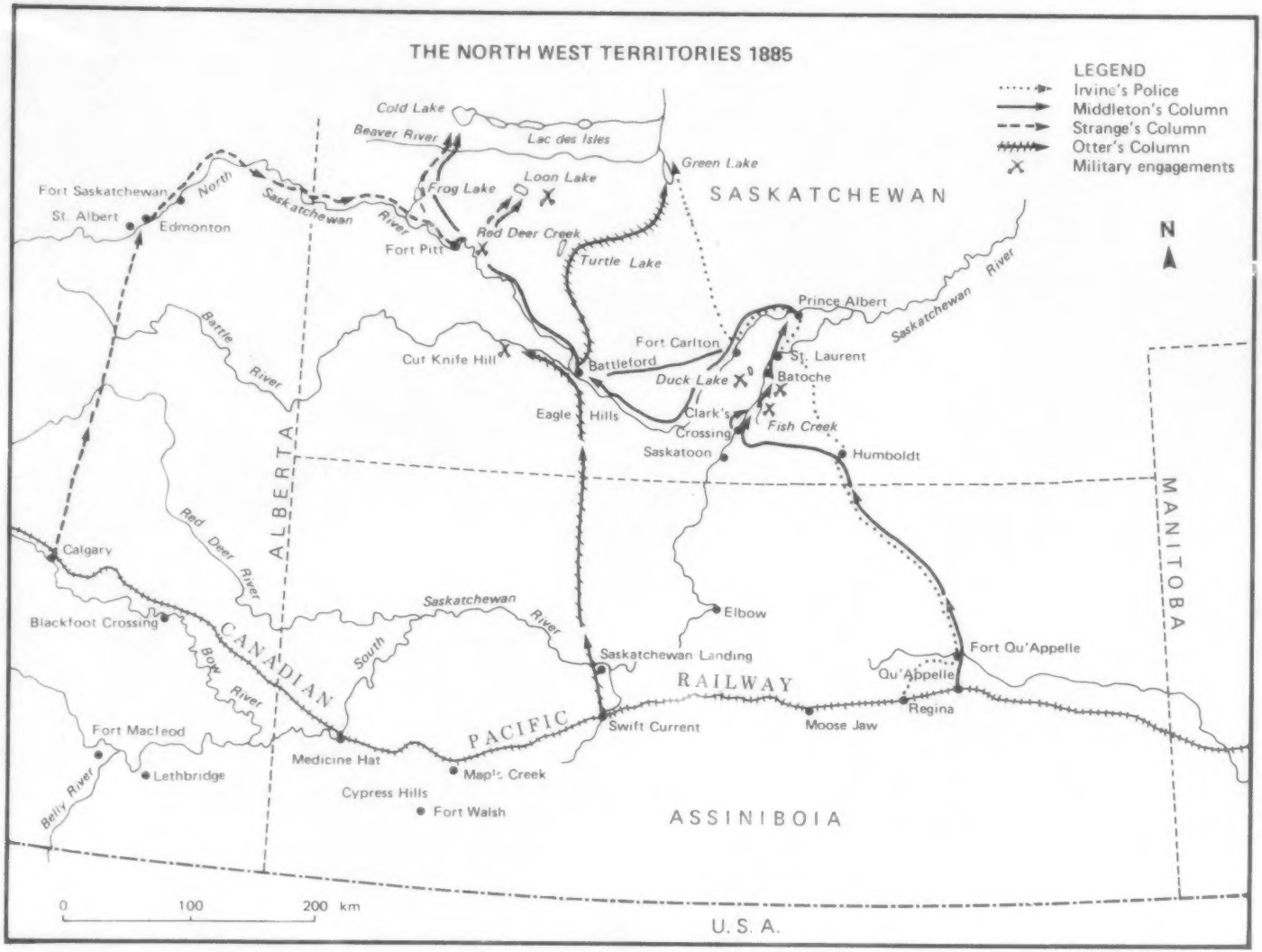
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Middleton's Column
Strange's Column
Otter's Column
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Beaver River
Lac des Isles
Green Lake
Loon Lake
Frog Lake
Fort Saskatchewan
St. Albert
Edmonton
North Saskatchewan River
Red Deer Creek
Fort Pitt
Turtle Lake
SASKATCHEWAN
Prince Albert
Saskatchewan River
Battle River
Fort Carlton
St. Laurent
Cut Knife Hill
Battleford
Duck Lake
Batoche
Eagle Hills
Clark's Crossing
Fish Creek
Saskatoon
Humboldt
ALBERTA
MANITOBA
Red Deer River
Calgary
Saskatchewan River
Elbow
Blackfoot Crossing
Bow River
South Saskatchewan River
Saskatchewan Landing
Fort Qu'Appelle
Qu'Appelle
CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY
Regina
Fort Macleod
Swift Current
Moose Jaw
Medicine Hat
Lethbridge
Maple Creek
Belly River
Cypress Hills
Fort Walsh
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